Vagabond
Story & Art by Takehiko Inoue
Based on the novel "Musashi" by Eiji Yoshikawa
vol. 4

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English Edition

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This graphic novel contains ***Vagabond*** monthly comics #9 through #10 in their entirety and the first chapter from issue #11.

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Based on the novel "Musashi" by Eiji Yoshikawa

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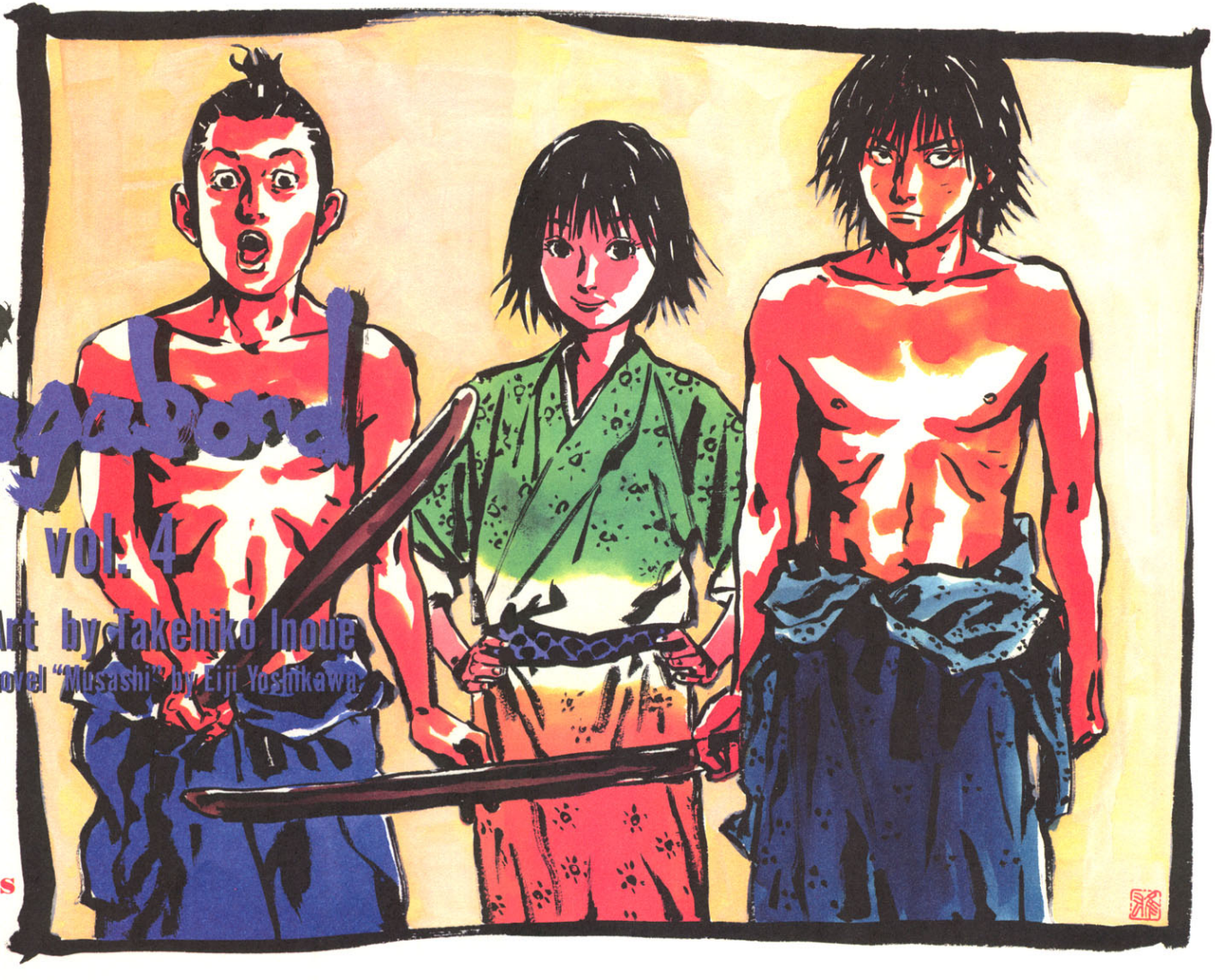
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF

T F T
The Furry Triangles



Vagabond

vol. 4

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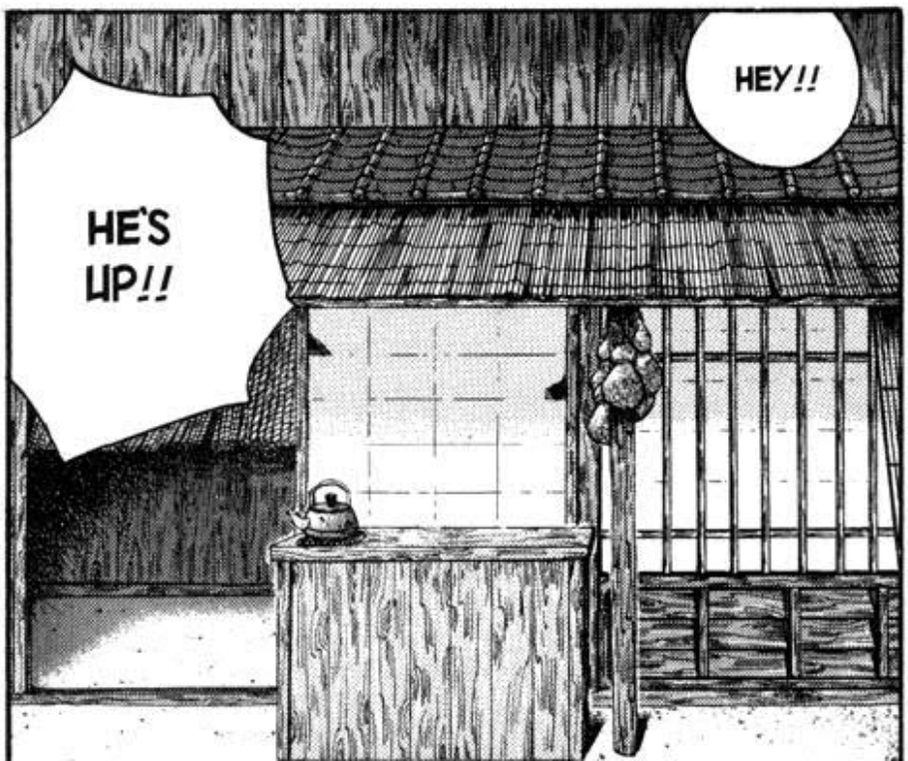
#32

Wanderers

TAKEZŌ!
OTSŪ...

TAKEZŌ!
OTSŪ!
OTSŪ!
HUGG

...!!


HEY!!
HE'S UP!!

HEY!!

OUCH!
TAKE IT EASY.
YOUR WOUNDS HAVEN'T HEALED YET!!
THIS KID DID A GOOD JOB OF NURSING YOU BACK TO HEALTH.

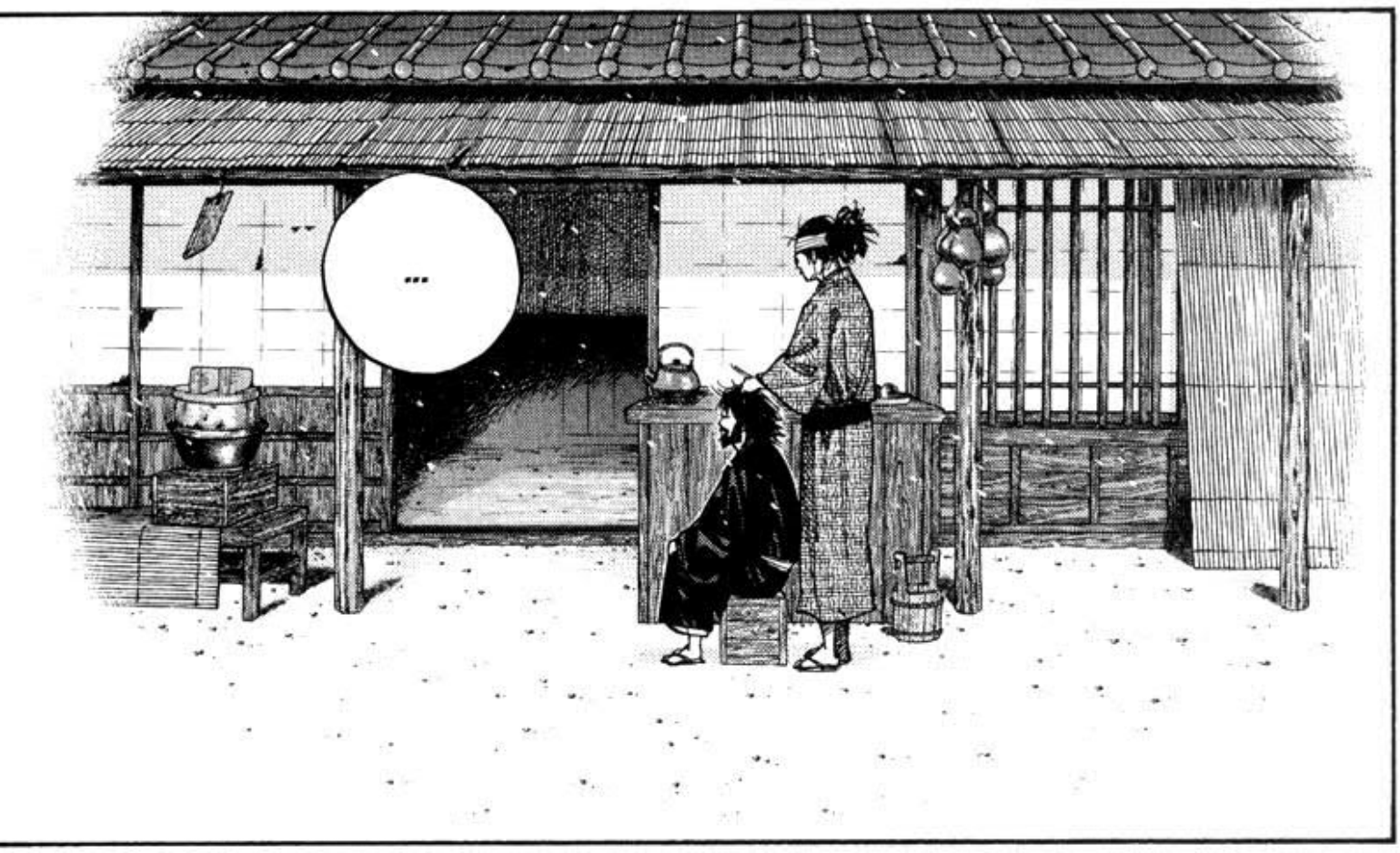
YOU'VE BEEN UNCONSCIOUS FOR THREE DAYS...
YOU LOST A LOT OF BLOOD FROM THOSE CUTS ON YOUR FOREHEAD AND CHEST.
YOU SHOULD THANK THE KID...

WHO ARE YOU?
AND HOW DO YOU KNOW MY NAME?
...!?
MIYAMOTO MUSASHI...!!
HUH!?
DON'T YOU KNOW WHO I AM?
HUH!?

EH, TAKEZŌ!?
YOU'RE AS RECKLESS AS ALWAYS!!
SMIRK

TAKUAN!!
HM...

HUH!?
DAMN MONK...


...

SNIP
SNIP

I FIGURED THERE'D BE A LOT OF STRONG SAMURAI HERE.
HM...
SO YOU CAME TO KYOTO...
FWICH
...TO HONE YOUR SWORDSMANSHIP SKILLS, I SUPPOSE?

DON'T YOU REALIZE HOW PRECIOUS LIFE IS?
I CAN'T BELIEVE YOUR COCKINESS- TO CHALLENGE THE YOSHIOKA SCHOOL LIKE THAT...
I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT HAVE MATURED A LITTLE...

HUH?
THE MASTER AIN'T COCKY!

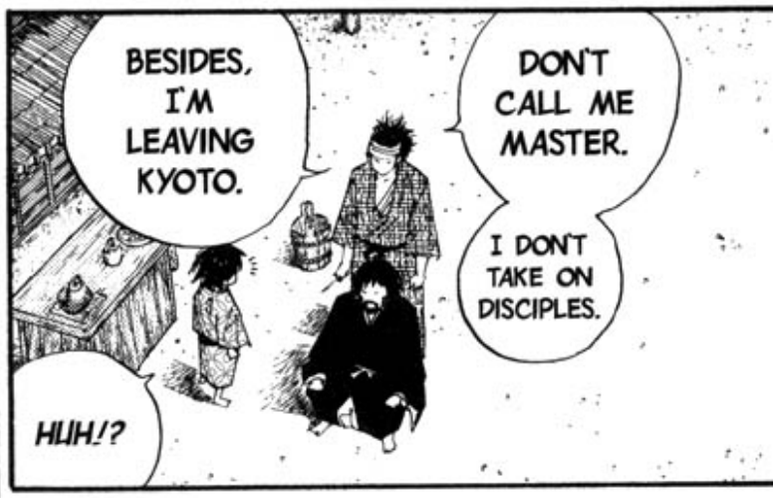
...

HE HAD YOSHIOKA DENSHICHIRŌ IN A DEADLOCK!!
ON TOP OF THAT, HE DEFEATED FIVE DISCIPLES... ALL BY HIMSELF!!
YOU'RE AMAZING, MASTER!!
...
WHAT'S YOUR NAME, KID?
HUH?
WHO TOLD YOU I HAD DENSHICHIRŌ IN A DEAD-LOCK...?
JOTARO!!
AND I--
I WANT TO BE A SAMURAI JUST LIKE YOU.
I THINK HE'S THE ONE THAT BURNED DOWN THE YOSHIOKA SCHOOL...
A DRUNKARD. HE WAS ALL BEAT UP.
AND HE LOOKED REALLY WEIRD.
HE SAID HE SAW EVERY-THING.

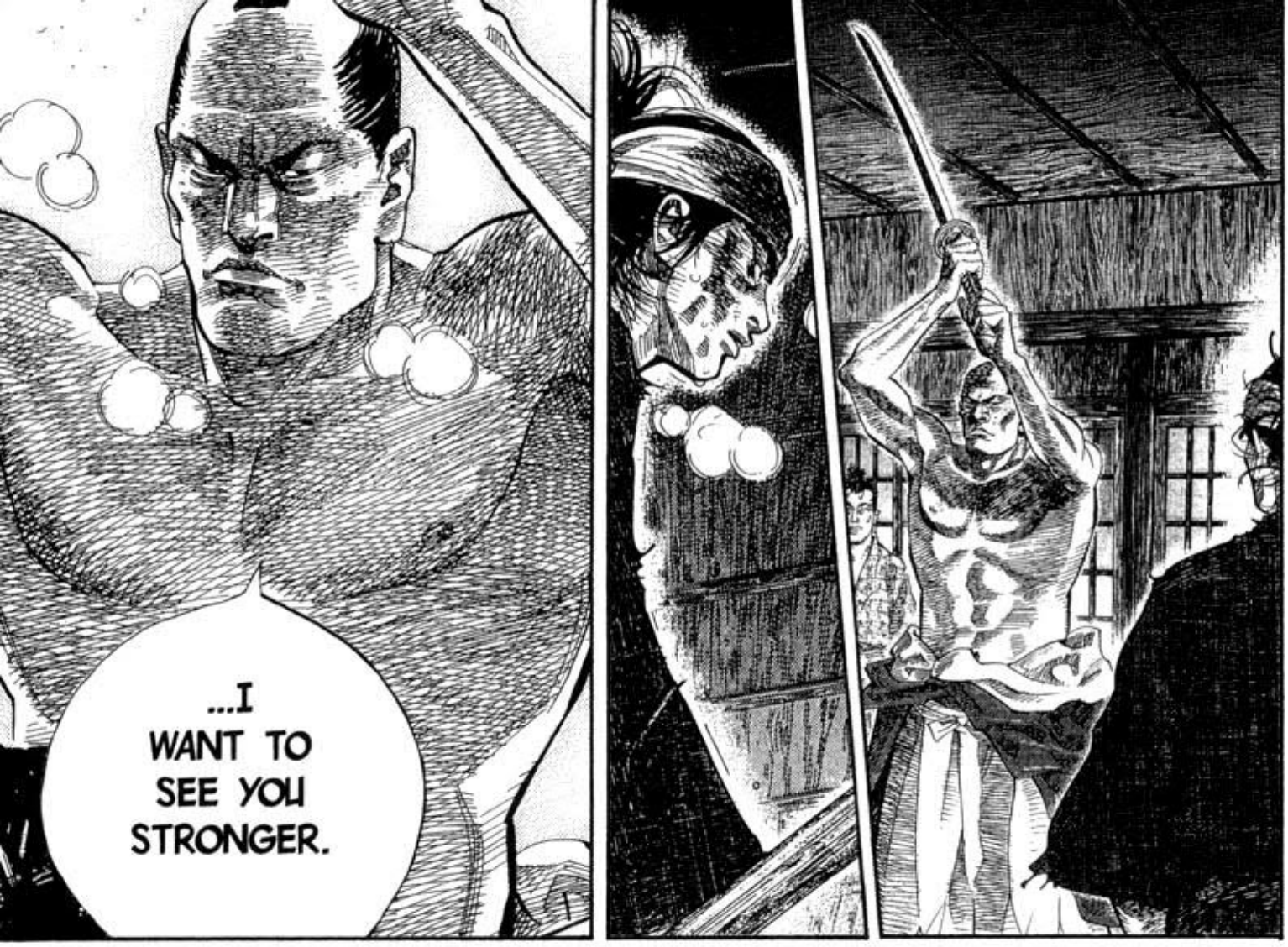
HE CARRIED YOU ALL THE WAY OVER HERE.

I'M GOING TO TAKE ONE ONE YEAR TO TRAVEL ACROSS THE COUNTRY.
I'M GOING TO WORK ON IMPROVING MY SWORDSMANSHIP.

I HAD DENSHICHIRO IN A DEADLOCK...?


DON'T CALL ME MASTER.
BESIDES, I'M LEAVING KYOTO.
I DON'T TAKE ON DISCIPLES.
HUH!?

THANKS FOR TAKING CARE OF ME, JŌTARŌ.


...I WANT TO SEE YOU STRONGER.

...

DAMN MONK...
TAKUAN.

I AM GOING TO BECOME STRONGER.

THE WORLD IS FULL OF STRONG MEN.

...
HMPH.
DOES THAT INTIMIDATE YOU?

...

NO...
IT INVIGORATES ME.

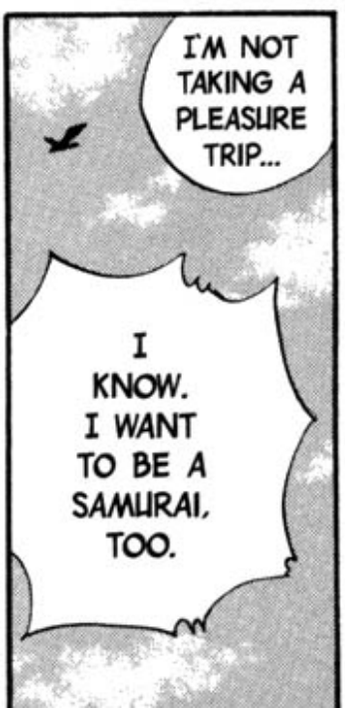
FIRST...
I'M HEADING FOR NARA.

I TOLD YOU, NO DISCIPLES.
I'M GOING WITH YOU!!

THAT'S WHY I'M TELLING YOU...
TAKING YOU ALONG WILL ONLY COMPLICATE THINGS.
URGH!
Fup
Fup
Fup
Fup
HEY!
HEY! LET GO!!

BUT THERE ARE SO MANY STRONG SAMURAI IN NARA...LIKE YAGYŪ SEKISHŪSAI AND HŌZŌIN IN'EI.
HMM...
THAT'S WHY I'M GOING THERE.
NOT TO MENTION ALL THE DANGEROUS STRAGGLERS AND RŌNIN ROAMING AROUND...

ALL THE SAMURAI IN KYOTO ARE SO PRETENTIOUS !!
FIND ANOTHER SAMURAI TO TRAIN UNDER!!
I WON'T BE YOUR MASTER.
I WANT TO BE WITH YOU, MASTER MIYAMOTO!!
YOU'RE STRONG AND UNREFINED.


I'M NOT TAKING A PLEASURE TRIP...
I KNOW. I WANT TO BE A SAMURAI, TOO.

MASTER!!
Fup
Fup
PLEASE TAKE ME WITH YOU...

...
UN-REFINED HE SAYS!
HEE HEE HEE
...
HMPH!
UN-REFINED ?
HEY...
NNGH!
WHUD
HEY...
YOU ALL RIGHT?
...
SAMURAI DON'T CRY.
...
SNIFF
SNIFF
...
I WANT TO BE A SAMURAI!!
I...

HUH?
SWICH
DON'T YOU WANT TO ASK ME...?
MUSASHI...

AREN'T YOU CURIOUS ABOUT HOW SHE'S DOING?
...ABOUT OTSŪ?

HAH! COME ON!!
N-NOT REALLY...
...!!

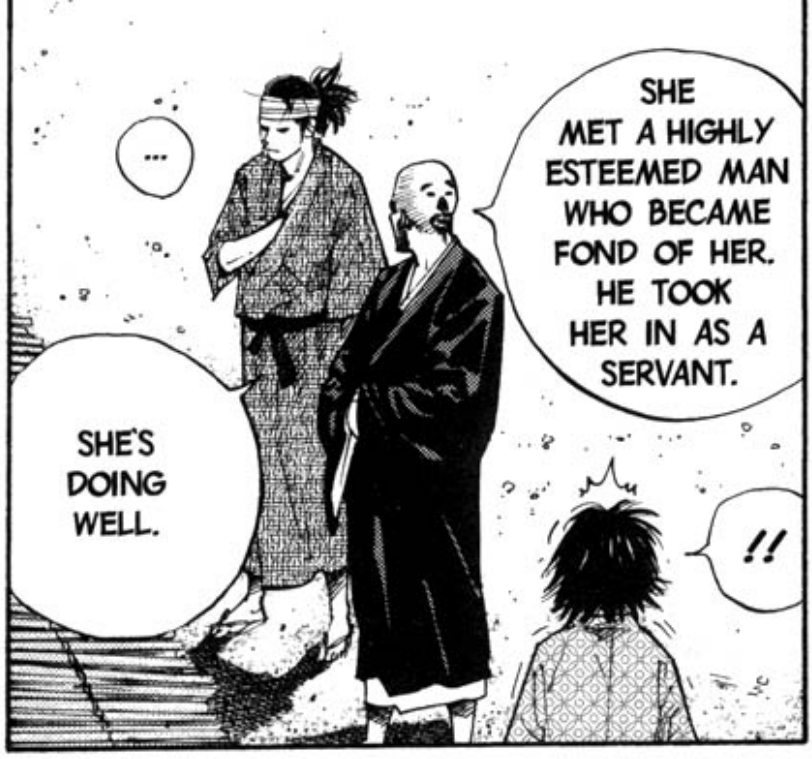
THAT'S WHAT YOU WERE CALLING OUT IN YOUR SLEEP!!
HEE HEE HEE
ISN'T THAT RIGHT, JŌTARŌ?
OTSŪ!
OTSŪ!
OTSŪ!

SNIF
UH-HUH.

HMPH.

FIP
FIP

OH, THANKS.
ALL FINISHED.

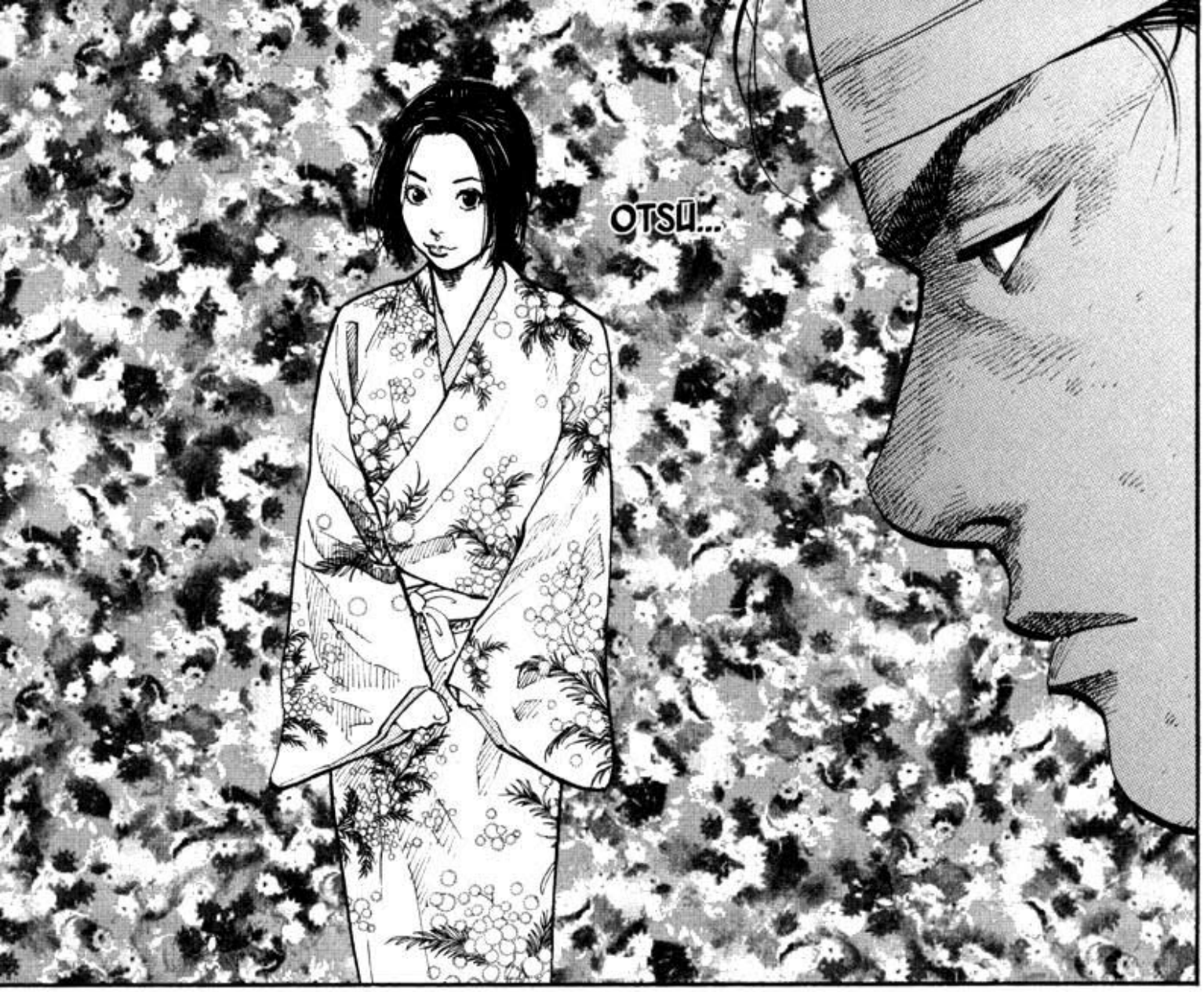

...
SHE MET A HIGHLY ESTEEMED MAN WHO BECAME FOND OF HER. HE TOOK HER IN AS A SERVANT.
SHE'S DOING WELL.
!!

DON'T WORRY.
OTSŪ IS FINE.

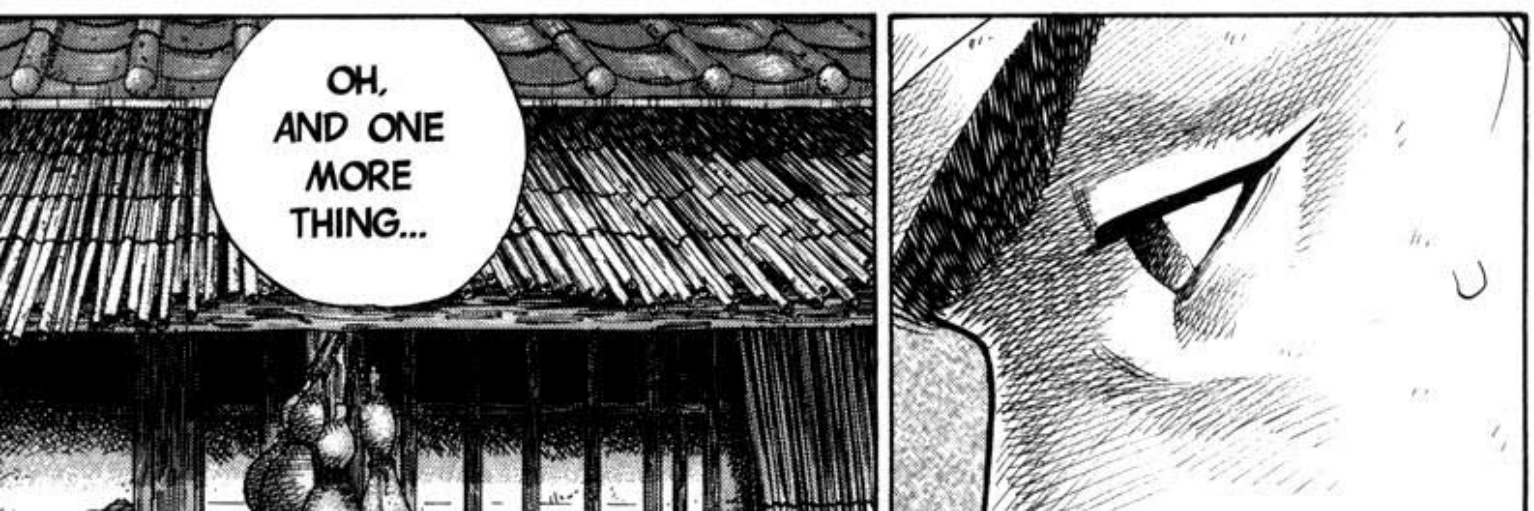
...
HMMM...
HUH?
HEE
HEE
HEE
HEE
HEE

...?

I'M SURE YOU'LL EVENTUALLY RUN INTO HER AGAIN...
ALONG YOUR PURSUIT OF THE WAY OF THE SWORD....


OTSU...

TUGG


OH,
AND ONE
MORE
THING...

SHE'S STILL AFTER ME...?
GRANNY HON'IDEN...
SHE'S AFTER BOTH YOU AND OTSŪ...
HUH...?
UH-HUH...
SHE'S SO DEVOTED TO HER SON.
CHIRP CHIRP
HMPH.
HUH?
I THINK I'LL HAVE YOU SHAVE MY BEARD, TOO.
SWICH
SWICH
SURE.

(WANTED: HONʼIDEN MATAHACHI)
人相
本位田又八
MMBL
MMBL

SO THIS IS THE GUY THAT BURNED DOWN THE YOSHIOKA SCHOOL.
WHAT A FOOL.
SERVES ʼEM RIGHT. THOSE GUYS WERE ARROGANT BASTARDS.
HUH?
HEY, OLD WOMAN! QUIT SHOVING!

HEY!
RRRRIP
TWITCH
TWITCH
TWITCH
WHYʼS SHE SHAKING?
HUH?

WHAT HAVE YOU DONE!?

MATAHACHI...
NO!!
WHAT'S SHE CRYING FOR?
MMBL MMBL.

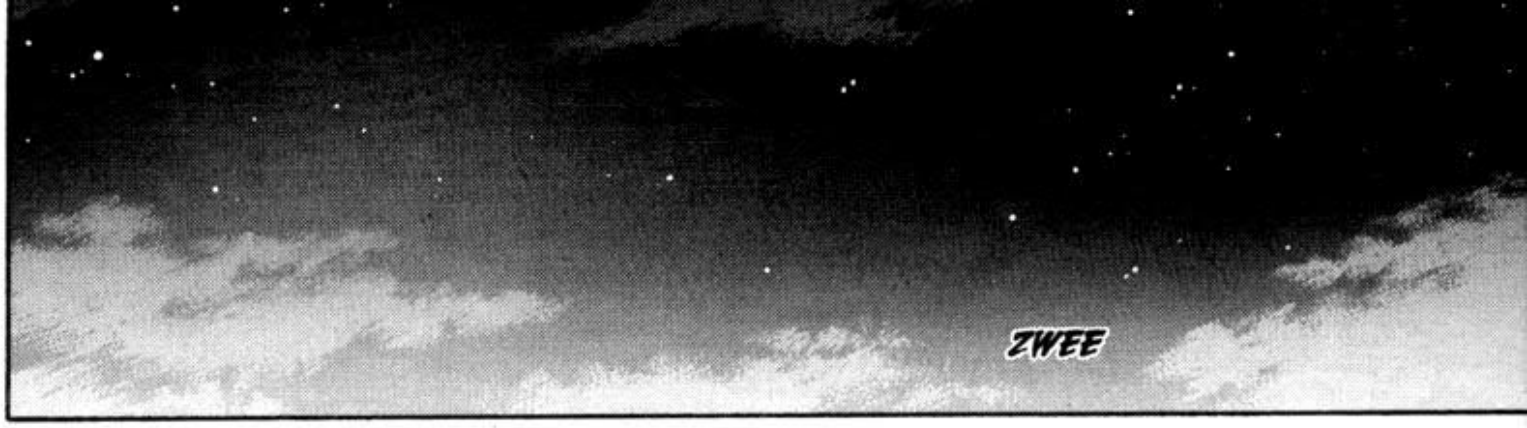
Vagabond

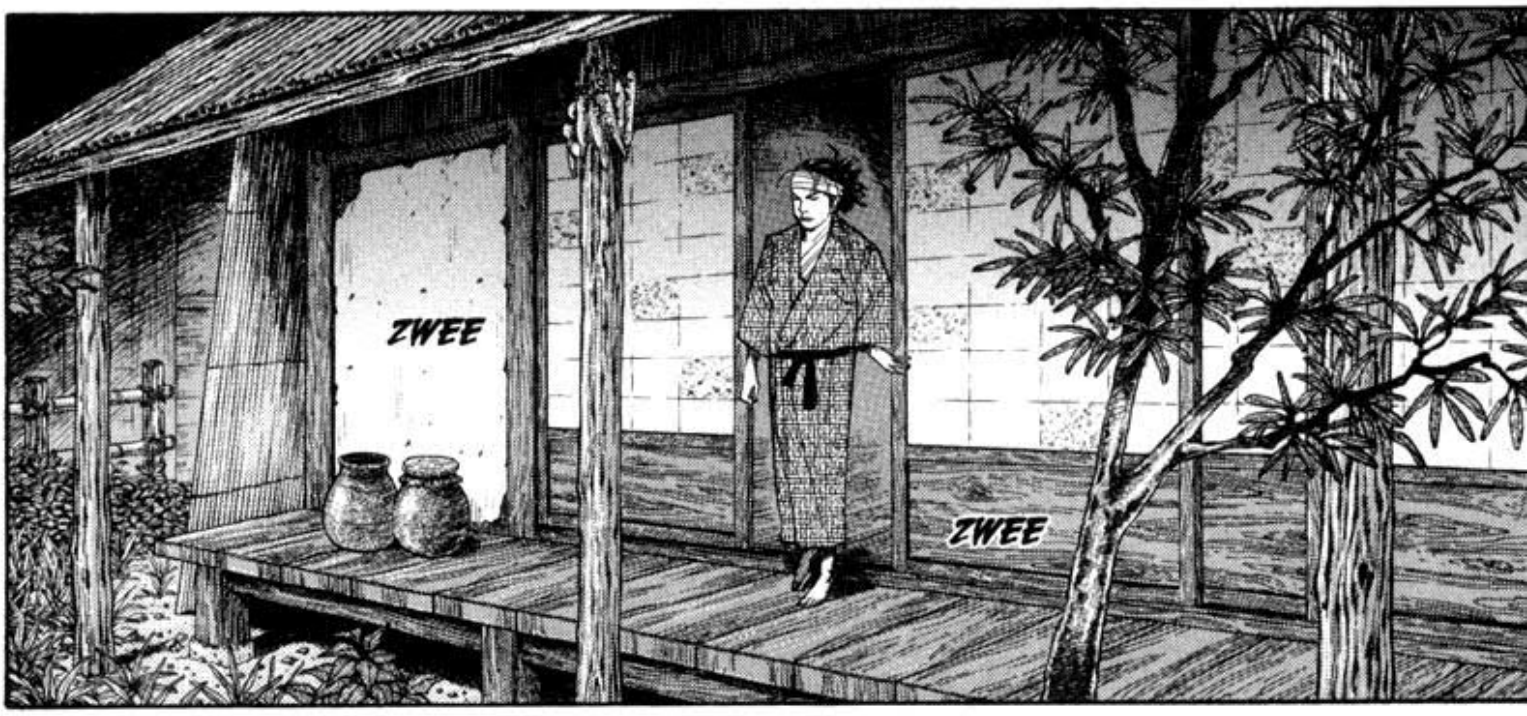
(AREN'T YOU DONE YET?)
まだか!?
(A BIT MORE...)
もう少し
(...AND I'LL BE DONE)
で完成

WHAT'S WRONG WITH ME?
HUF
HUF
HUF

HUF
HUF
HUF

#33 Departures


ZWEE


ZWEE
ZWEE

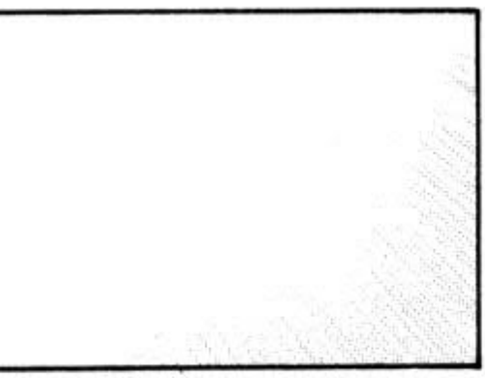
I KEEP DREAMING ABOUT OTSU...
MUST BE BECAUSE I JUST SAW TAKUAN...

WHAT KIND OF GUY IS SHE WORKING FOR?
...

SHE'S DOING WELL.
SHE MET A HIGHLY ESTEEMED MAN WHO BECAME FOND OF HER. HE TOOK HER IN AS A SERVANT.

OTSU...
...ARE YOU DOING OKAY?

I'M SUPPOSED TO HAVE CHOSEN THE WAY OF THE SWORD!!
WHAT AM I THINKING ?



ZWEE
ZWEE

I'M A DAMN FOOL!!

KLAK
KLAK

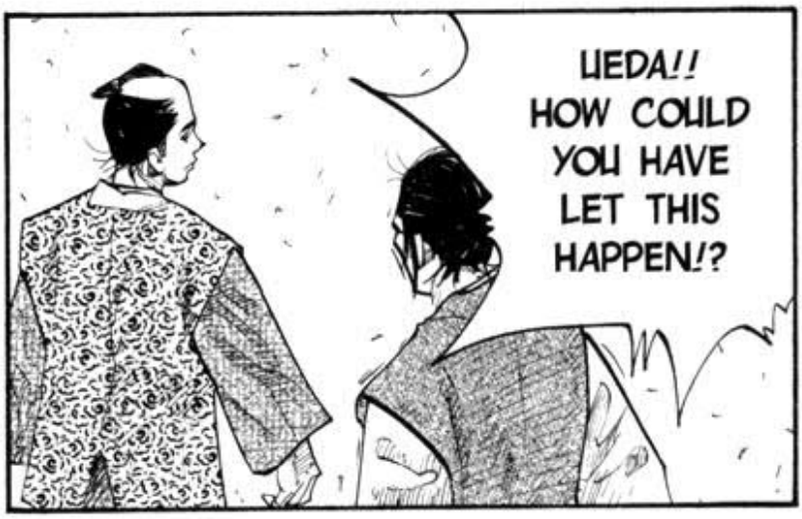
R
R
R
R
R
R
R
R
IT'S NO GOOD...
THERE'S NOTHING MORE WE CAN DO...!!

HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF

HUF
HUF
HUF
MIYAMOTO MUSASHI...
DID *HE* DO THIS!?

MASTER ....!!
I'M SO SORRY.
DID MIYAMOTO MUSASHI DO THIS!?

RRRRRR


UEDA!! HOW COULD YOU HAVE LET THIS HAPPEN!?

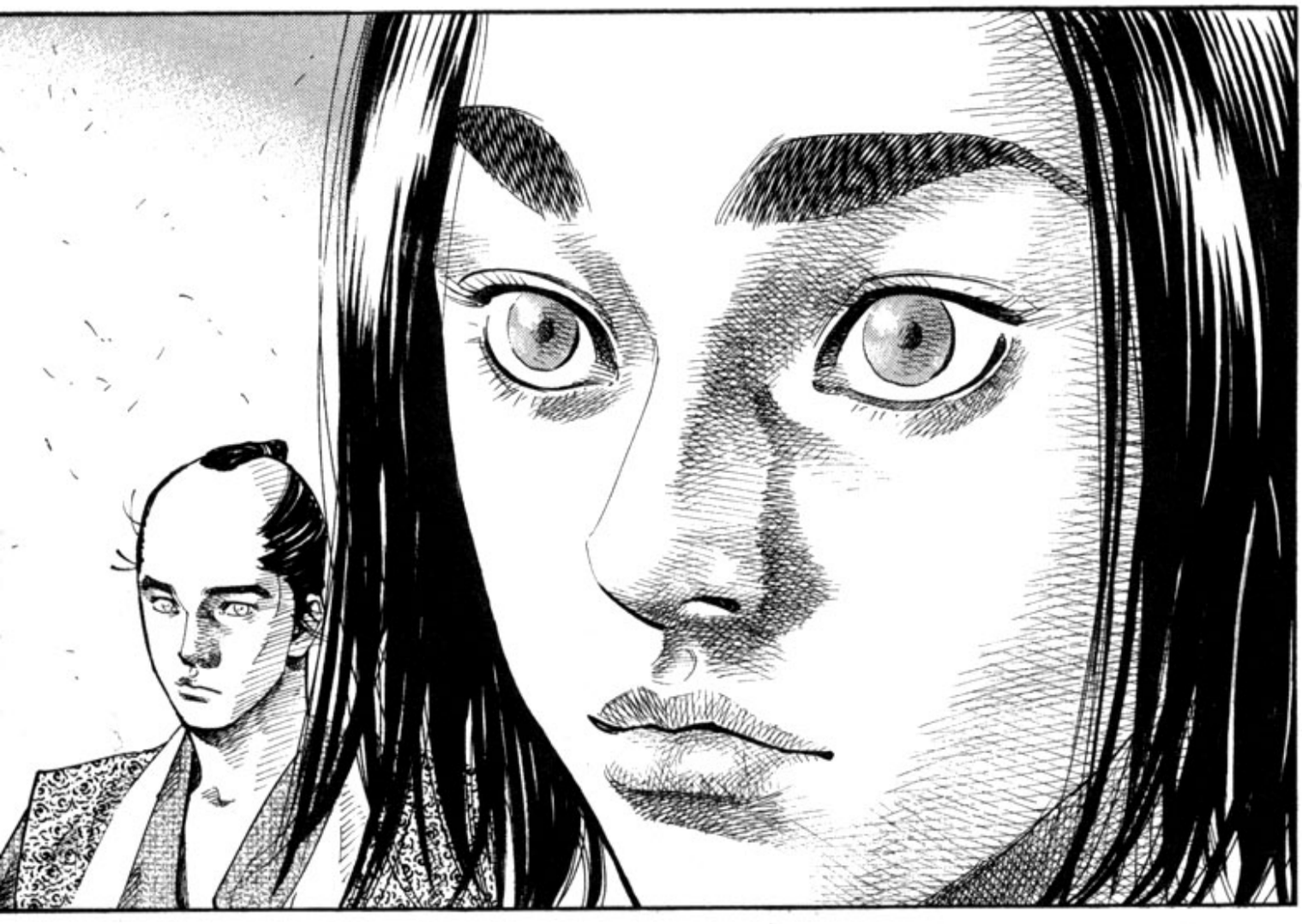
FSH

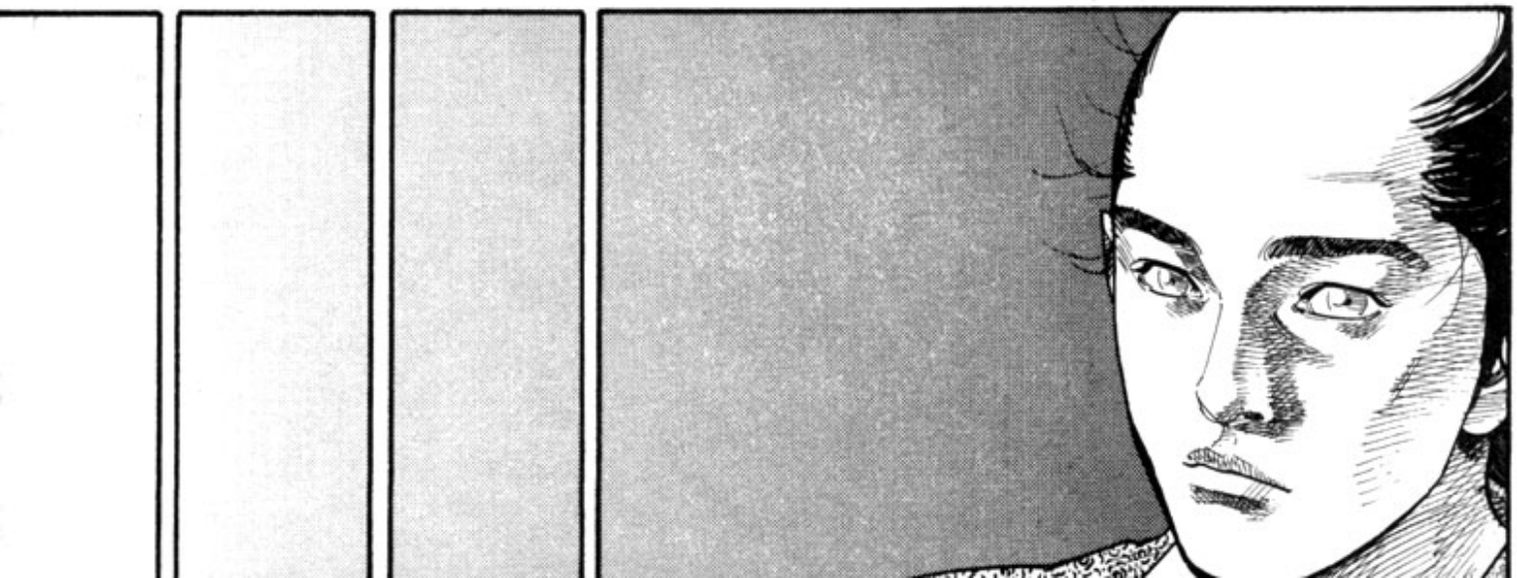
TEAR DOWN WHAT'S LEFT OF IT SO IT DOESN'T SPREAD TO THE NEIGHBORING BUILDINGS.
AT THIS RATE, THE FIRE WILL SPREAD.
DO IT NOW.
TEAR IT DOWN.
SIR?

TEAR IT DOWN!
HURRY!!
Y-YES... SIR!!

KRAK
THUP

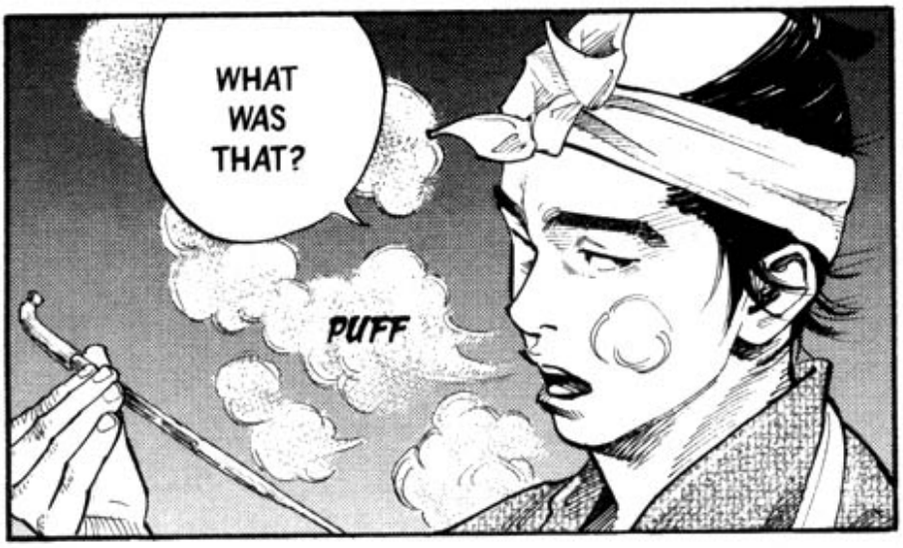
KRAK
THWAK
THUP



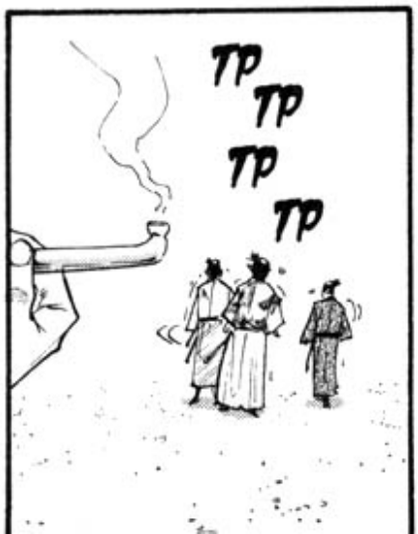


KLAKK
KLAKK
I GUESS THE YOSHIOKA SCHOOL COULDN'T LAST LONG WITHOUT ITS FOUNDER, KEMPO.
I GUESS SO.

THEY GOT WHAT THEY DESERVED...
UH-OH!!
I MEAN, HE'S JUST A PLAYBOY...
WITH SEIJŪRŌ AS THE SUCCESSOR...


WHAT WAS THAT?
PUFF

...


TP TP TP TP

UEDA RYŌHEI !!
ULP...

ALL THE MEMORIES OF HIS FATHER HAVE BEEN BURNED TO THE GROUND.
HOW COULD HE NOT BE AFFECTED?
KLAKK

KLAK
KLAK

DON'T CRY.
DO YOU KNOW WHY WE ENCOUNTER HARDSHIP?

KLUNK
KLAK
URGH...
IT'S SO AWFUL I WANT TO CRY.

SMIRK
SO THAT WE CAN BECOME STRONGER.

THIS IS GIVING ME THE OPPORTUNITY TO BECOME A MASTER SWORDSMAN.
HMPH.
I'M ONLY GOING TO GET BETTER.

WITHOUT FATHER... THERE'S ONLY ONE PERSON I CAN LEARN FROM...

I'M GOING TO THE YAGYŪ.
!!

SENSEI!
DENSHI-CHIRŌ.

YOU'RE NOT IN ANY SHAPE TO GO ANY-WHERE.

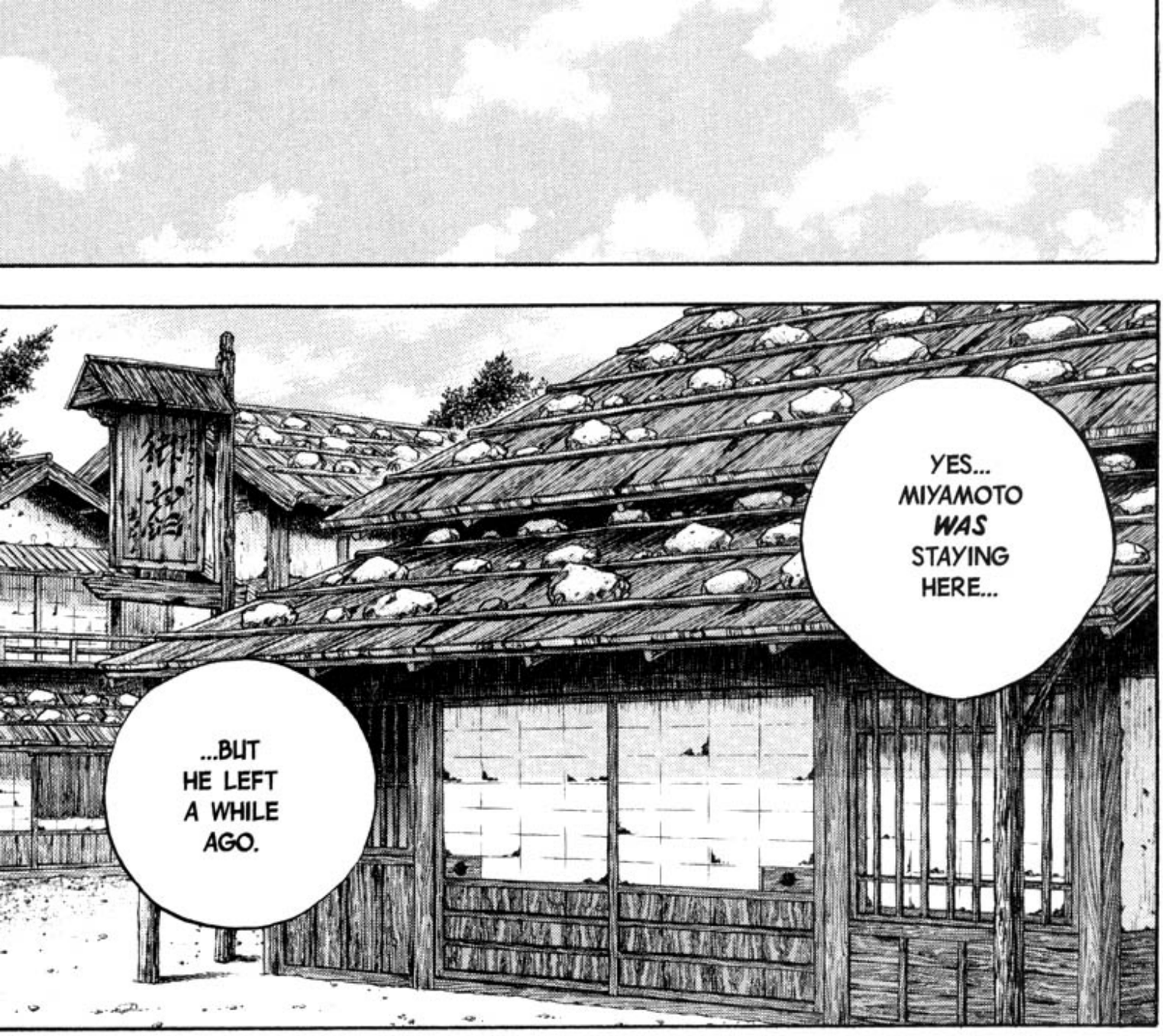
YAGYŪ SEKISHŪSAI...

UEDA...
LOOK AFTER THINGS HERE.

YAGYŪ SEKISHŪSAI...

I'M MOVING ON.

FATHER...
IF MIYAMOTO MUSASHI EVER COMES BACK HERE, GIVE HIM THIS.
IT'S THE DATE OF OUR NEXT MATCH.
KRICH
I'M HEADING OUT...
KRICH


YES... MIYAMOTO *WAS* STAYING HERE...
...BUT HE LEFT A WHILE AGO.

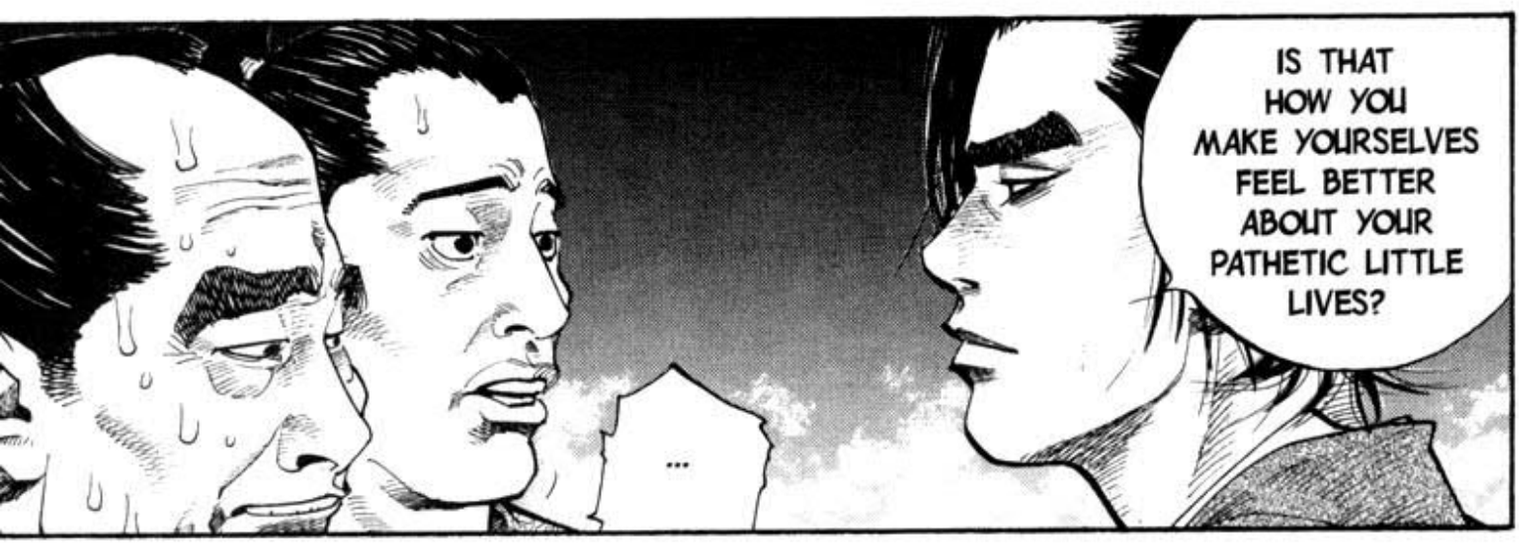
S-SOMETHING ABOUT GOING TO NARA...
BUT I DON'T KNOW EXACTLY WHERE...

NARA...

DID HE SAY WHERE HE WAS HEADING?
GULP.

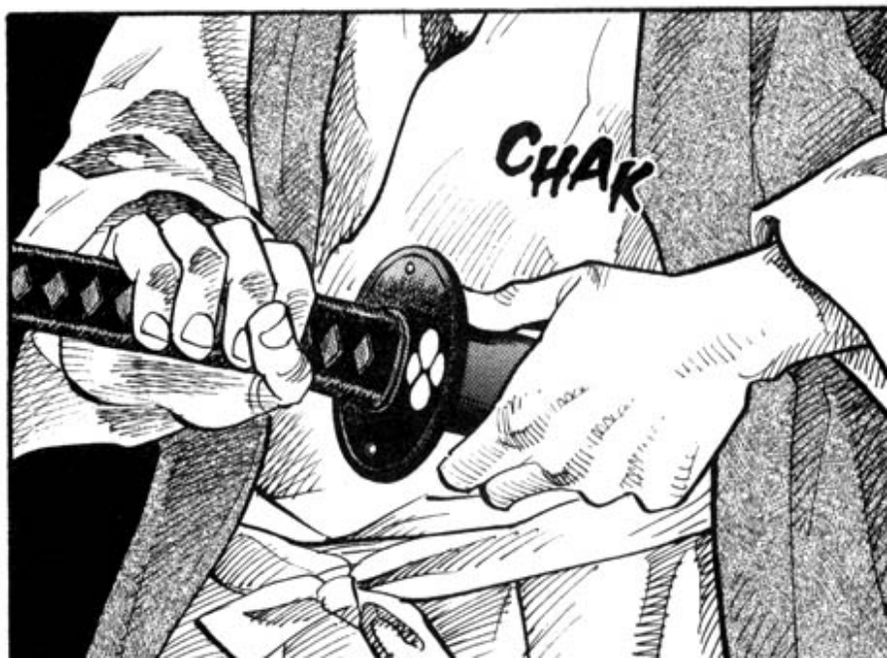
PHEW...
THAT WAS SCARY...
THE YOSHIOKA FOLKS ARE PRETTY DESPERATE.
I'LL SAY.
SOME NO-NAME RŌNIN STIRS THE PLACE UP...
...AND THEN THE WHOLE SCHOOL BURNS DOWN!
THE SCHOOL'S NEVER BEEN IN SUCH DISGRACE!!
HA HA!
THEY'VE NEVER KNOWN SUCH SHAME!
HEE HEE
HOW PATHETIC...
!!
...!!
ULP!

...AND YET YOU GLOAT WHEN THE STRONG ARE DISGRACED.
HMPH!
YOU HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH OUR LIVES...
...
GASP
GASP


IS THAT HOW YOU MAKE YOURSELVES FEEL BETTER ABOUT YOUR PATHETIC LITTLE LIVES?
...

WHO DO YOU THINK OWNS YOUR LIFE ANYWAY?

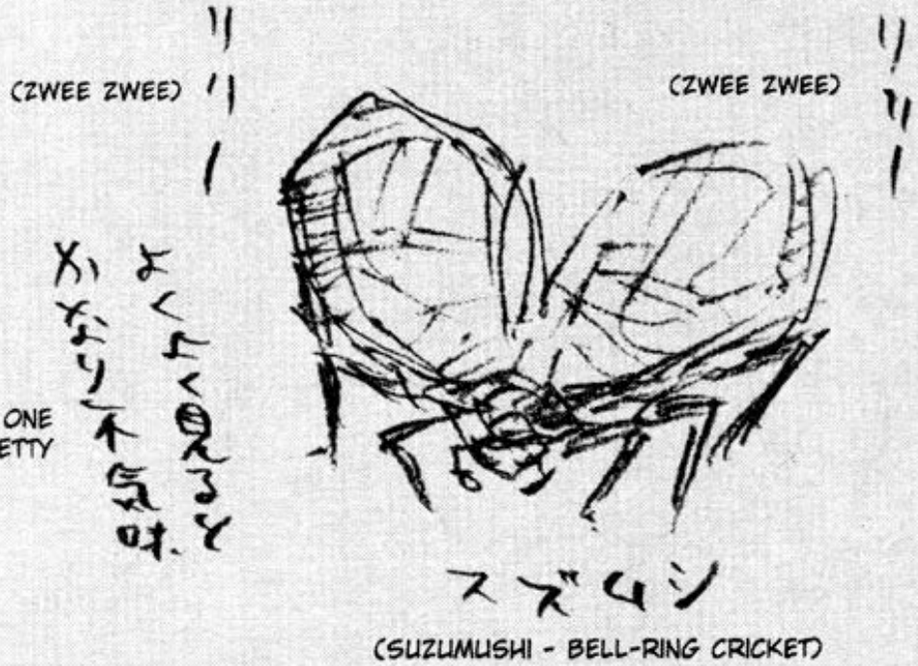
TWITCH
TWITCH
TWITCH
TWITCH


CHAK

YOU'RE SO PITIFUL...
NOT EVEN WORTH CUTTING DOWN.
PLISH
PLISH
HMPH!
...!!
FWISH
?

AIEEE!
GION TŌJI.
FROM NOW ON, I'M AN ASSASSIN FOR THE YOSHIOKA SCHOOL.
KRICH
MIYAMOTO MUSASHI, I WON'T LET YOU ESCAPE ME.

Vagabond


リーリー
(ZWEE ZWEE)
よく見ると
かなり不気味。
(IF YOU LOOK AT ONE CLOSELY, IT'S PRETTY DISGUSTING.)
リーリー
(ZWEE ZWEE)
スズムシ
(SUZUMUSHI - BELL-RING CRICKET)

HE'S JUST LIKE ME...
...AND IF I STOP BY EVERY WELL-KNOWN SCHOOL ALONG THE WAY, I'LL EVENTUALLY FIND HIM.
...THE WAY OF THE SWORD IS THE ONLY THING HE THINKS ABOUT.
KRICH
AND THIS MEANS...
HMPH
...I'LL HAVE PLENTY OF OPPORTUNITIES TO WORK ON MY OWN SWORDSMANSHIP.
KRICH
I'LL HEAD FOR NARA...
THIS MAY TURN OUT TO BE FUN AFTER ALL...
KRICH
HA HA!
KRICH
KRICH

#34 Departures II

STOP FOLLOWING ME.

YOU GUYS JUST HAPPEN TO BE WALKING IN FRONT OF ME!!
I AIN'T FOLLOWING YOU.

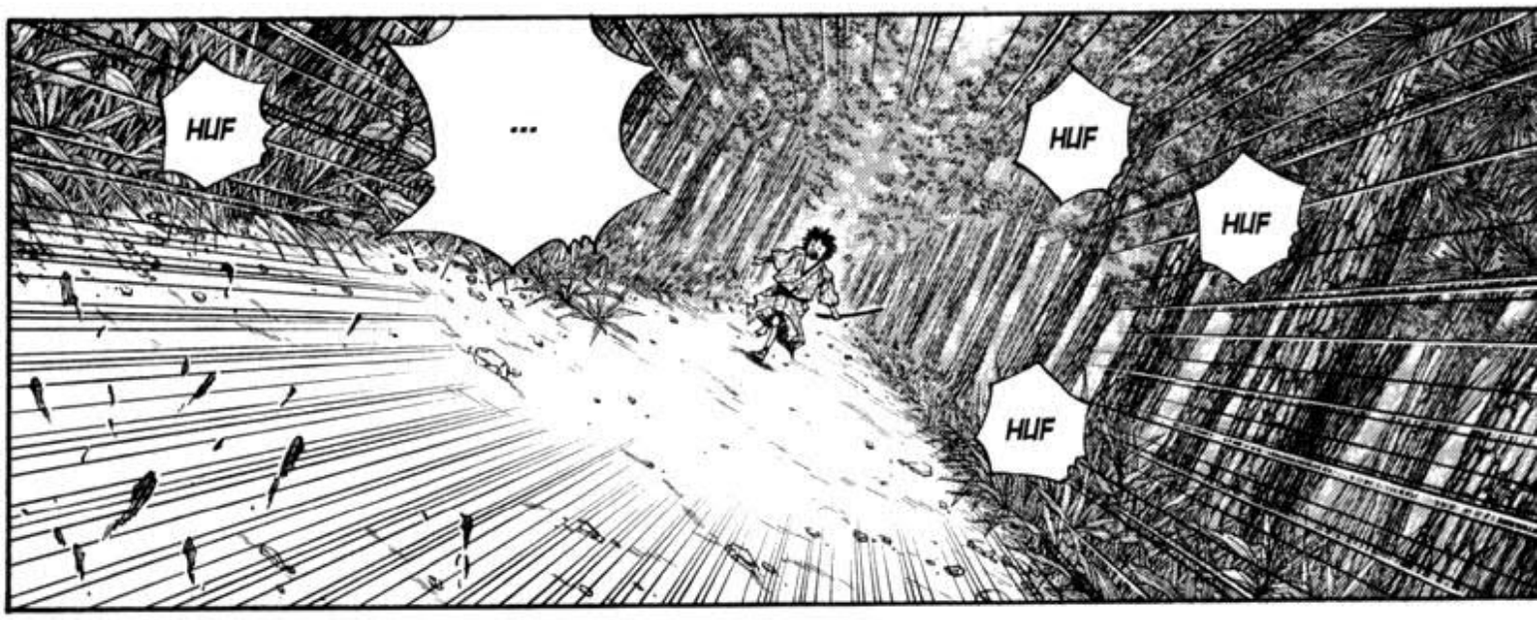
...

FWISH
HEY!!

I SEE...
...

WAIT FOR ME!!
STOP!!
TMP

ARGH...


HUF
...
HUF
HUF
HUF

HUF
HUF
...
HUF
HUF

STOP!!
MASTER!!

WAIT FOR ME!!
MASTER!!

MASTER ...

YEAH.
YOU SURE YOU WANT TO LEAVE HIM?

HE'S BETTER OFF WITHOUT ME.
I HAVE ENOUGH TROUBLE OF MY OWN.

...

...
WELL...
...MAYBE YOU'RE *STILL* NOT READY FOR SOMETHING LIKE THAT...
THAT COULD BE CONSIDERED AN ASPECT OF TRAINING IN ITSELF...
YOU KNOW...
THE RESPONSI-BILITY OF WATCHING OVER A KID...

HMM...
COME TO THINK OF IT, THIS REMINDS ME OF WHAT YOU SAID TO...

I'M GOING WITH YOU.
TAKEZŌ...
I ALREADY TOLD GRANNY HON'IDEN THAT I WASN'T GOING TO HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH HER FAMILY.
I CAN'T STAY IN MIYAMOTO VILLAGE ANYMORE.
HUH!?
FWIP
GASP!
YOU'LL GET IN THE WAY OF MY TRAINING.

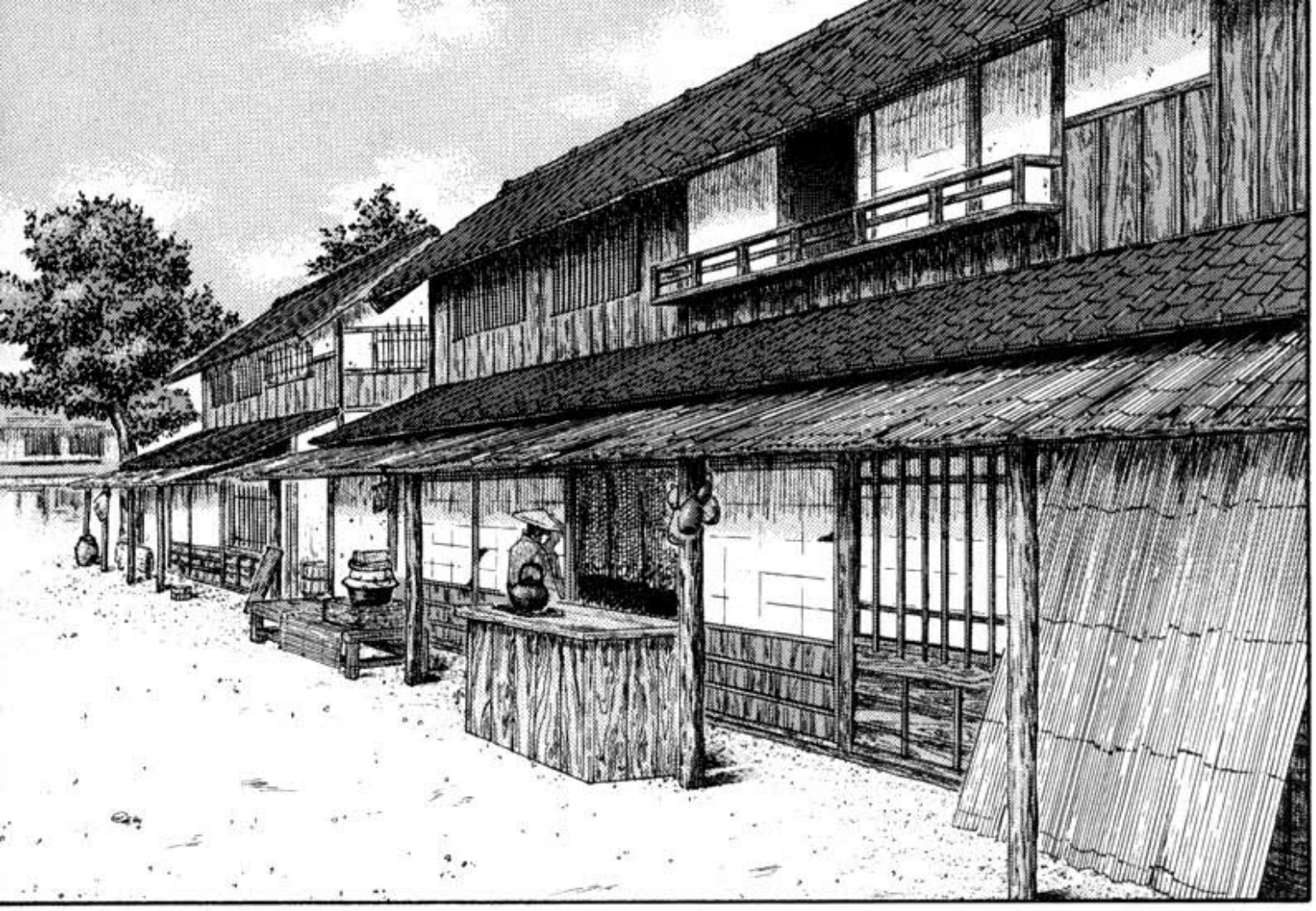
I HAVE ENOUGH TROUBLE DEALING WITH MYSELF...
HMPH!
I'VE NEVER HEARD OF SOMEONE TRAINING WITH A WOMAN BY HIS SIDE.

...

YOU WERE TRYING TO ACT SO TOUGH...
THAT'S WHAT YOU SAID...
...

DAMN MONK...
...TAKUAN.
YOU TRYING TO SWEET TALK ME?

HM?
TAKUAN, I NEED YOUR ADVICE...



HELLO.
!!
URK!

FP
FP
OH, IT'S YOU.

HE'S A TOUGH FELLA, I MEAN WITH INJURIES LIKE THAT...
HE SAID HE WAS HEADING FOR NARA.

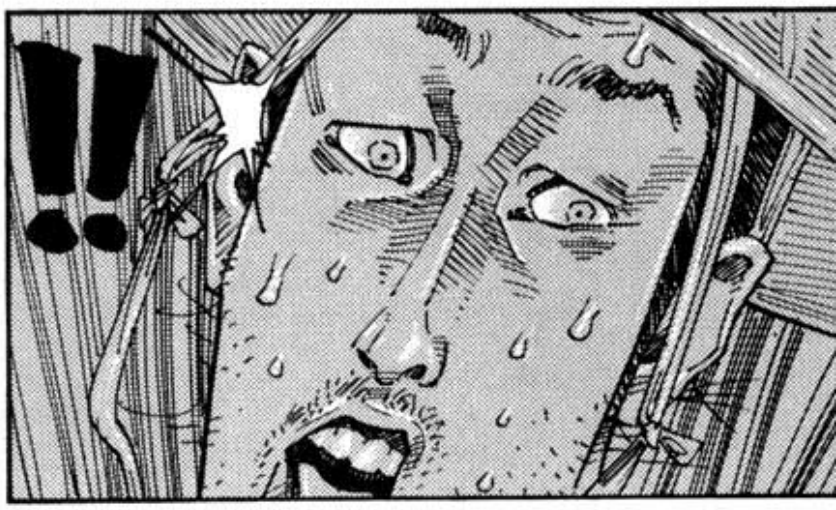
I WAS WONDERING ABOUT THE INJURED FELLOW I BROUGHT HERE...
OH, HIM.

NARA...

WE GREW UP TOGETHER...!!
THERE'S NO REASON I CAN'T DO WHAT HE'S DONE.
HE'S GONNA BE SOMEBODY SOME DAY.
I CAN DO IT, TOO. I CAN...
AMAZING, REALLY.
AN EXTRAORDINARY MAN.

HERE'S A FLYER OF THE GUY WHO BURNED DOWN THE YOSHIOKA SCHOOL.
IT'S A GOOD LIKENESS.
...
PUT IT UP WHERE YOUR GUESTS CAN SEE IT.
YES, SIR.

HM? HERE COMES AN OFFICIAL.


!!

I'M A LAW-ABIDING CITIZEN, SIR...
HEY, THERE.
HA HA WE KNOW THAT.

HE MUST'VE HAD SOME GRUDGE AGAINST YOSHIOKA.
SAYS HE MIGHT BE BURNED AT THE STAKE.
BURNING DOWN THE YOSHIOKA SCHOOL...
MUST'VE BEEN OUTTA HIS MIND.
YES...
WELL THEN, MAKE SURE YOU PUT IT UP.
YES, SIR.
!!
GASP!
(HONIDEN MATAHACHI)
HEY!!
...!!
...

HUF
HUF
HUF

DAMN!!
DAMN!!

C-CRIMINAL!?
IF I HIDE A CRIMINAL, I'LL BE ARRESTED, TOO!!
HUF
HUF
I THOUGHT YOU'D LEFT US!!
WHY'D YOU COME BACK!?

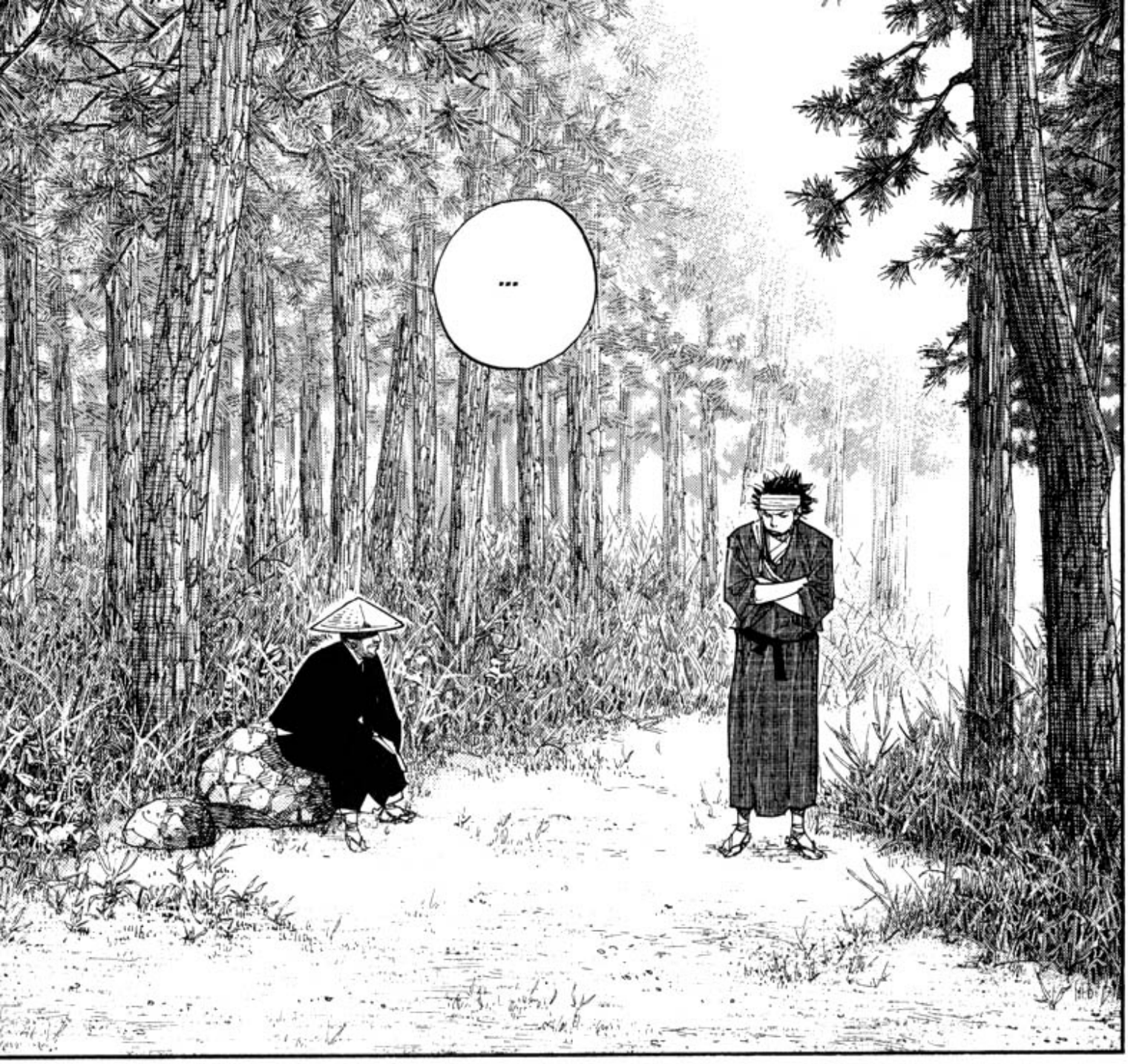
WHAT ?
YOU HAVE TO BE KIDDING!!

GASP!
!!
TAKEZŌ ?
DO YOU REMEMBER TAKEZŌ?
YOU TOOK US BOTH IN...WHEN WE WERE SEVENTEEN...

MIYAMOTO MUSASHI, THE GUY WHO'S BEEN THE TALK OF THE TOWN...
THE ONE THAT TOOK ON THE YOSHIOKA SCHOOL...
THAT'S TAKEZŌ...

H-HE'S... ALIVE...?
WHAT...!?

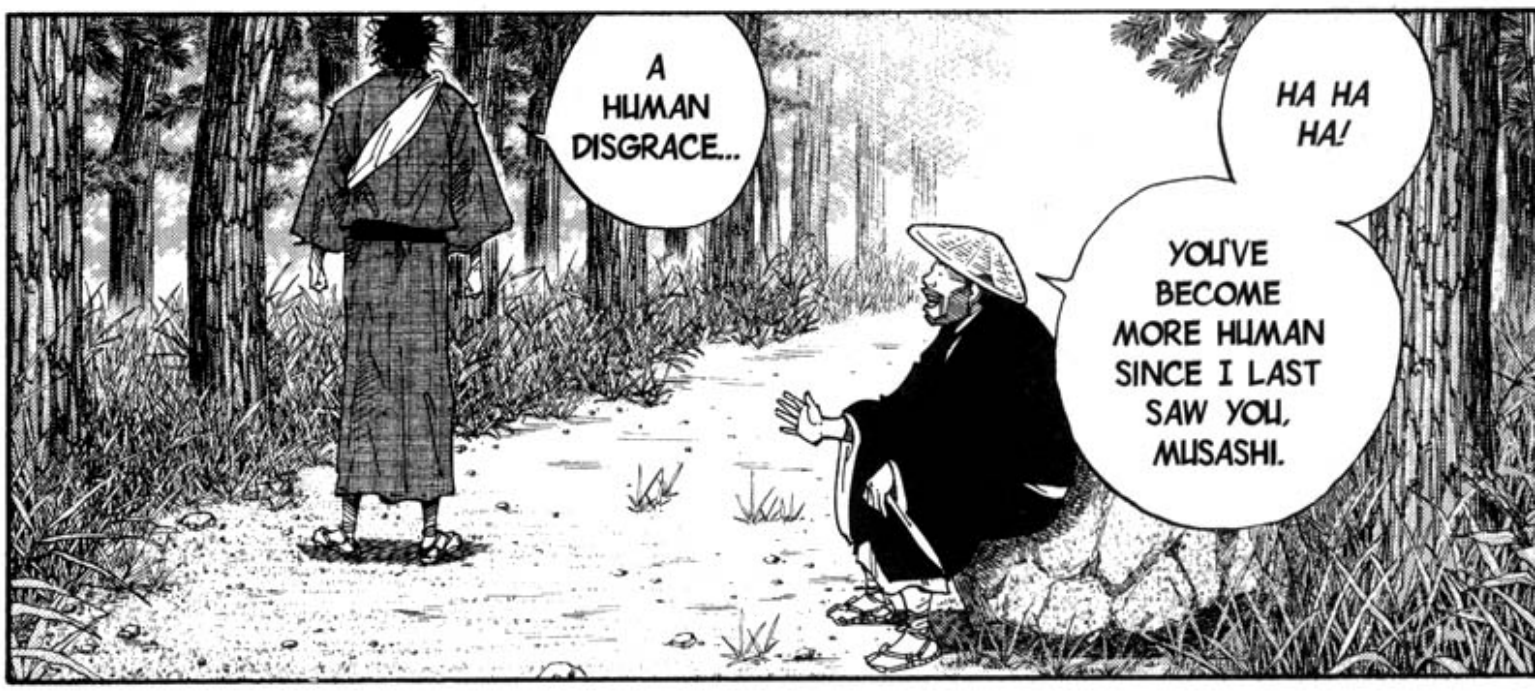
...!!
ZHOOP
IS IT TRUE!?


...

...
SO SHAMEFUL...

YOU CAN'T STOP DREAMING OF OTSU...
HMM, I SEE...

I THINK ABOUT HER...
...ALL THE TIME.
SO YOU THINK ABOUT HER A LOT?
...


A HUMAN DISGRACE...
HA HA HA!
YOU'VE BECOME MORE HUMAN SINCE I LAST SAW YOU, MUSASHI.

I MISS HER.

NOT ONLY DO I THINK ABOUT HER...

I'M SUCH A FOOL!
WHY AM I ASKING HIM ABOUT THIS...!?
HOW DO YOU SHAKE IT OFF...?
MONKS AREN'T DISTRACTED LIKE THIS ...

WHAT!?

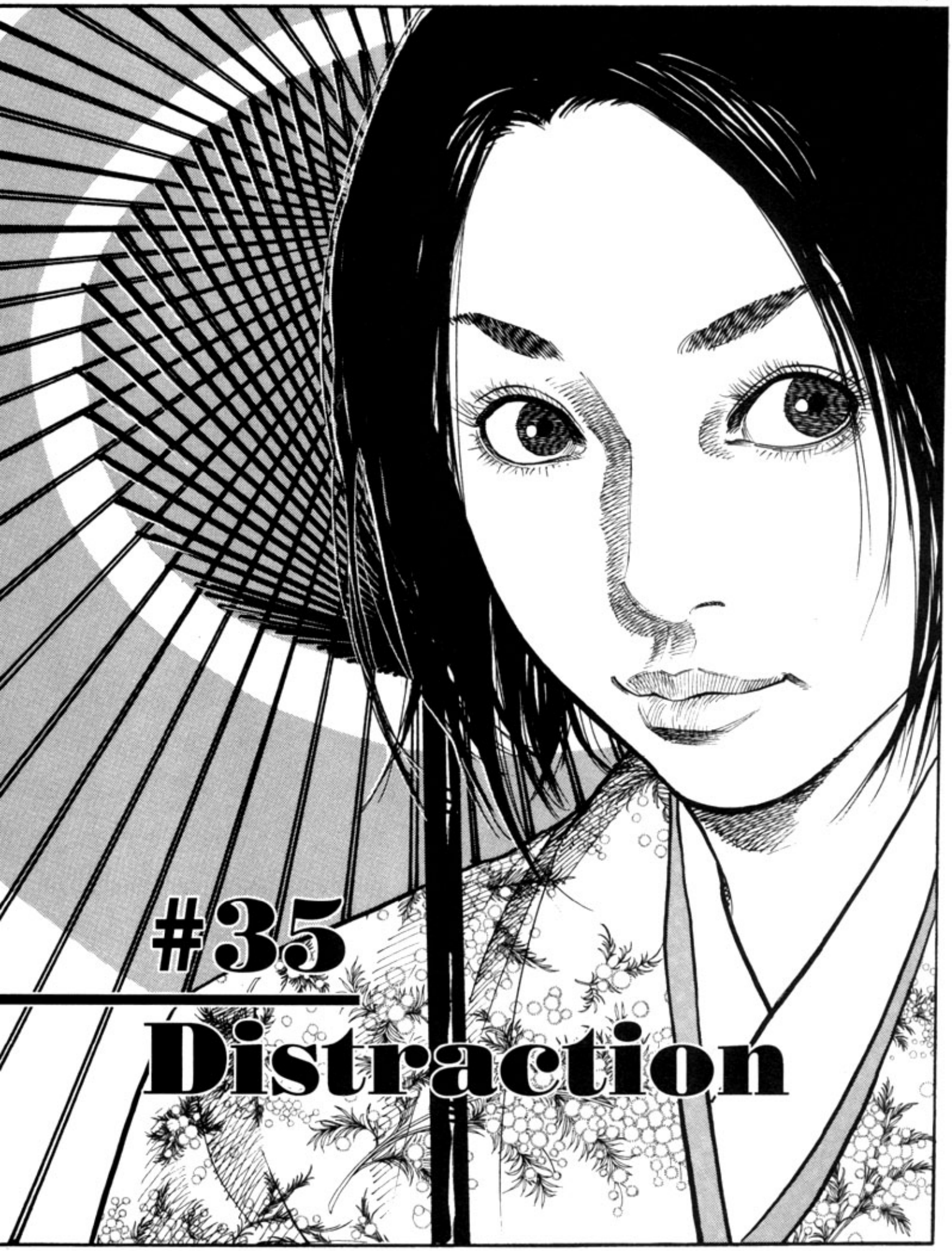
WITH THE STATE YOU'RE IN, EVEN I COULD CUT YOU DOWN.
I SEE...
!!

FWICH

HMM...
FP

HERE.
FWIP

...YOU'LL DIE BEFORE YOU EVER SEE OTSŪ AGAIN.
IF SOMEONE LIKE *ME* CAN CUT YOU DOWN...



#35 Distraction

C'MON, MUSASHI!
WHAT DO YOU SAY? LET'S HAVE A LITTLE MATCH.
...
CUT IT OUT.
THINK YOU CAN TAKE ME?
C'MON ...
LET'S GO.
...
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

I'M NOT SEVENTEEN ANYMORE.
OH?

I COULD KILL YOU WITH THIS CRUMMY STICK...

OH, BY THE WAY... ABOUT OTSŪ...

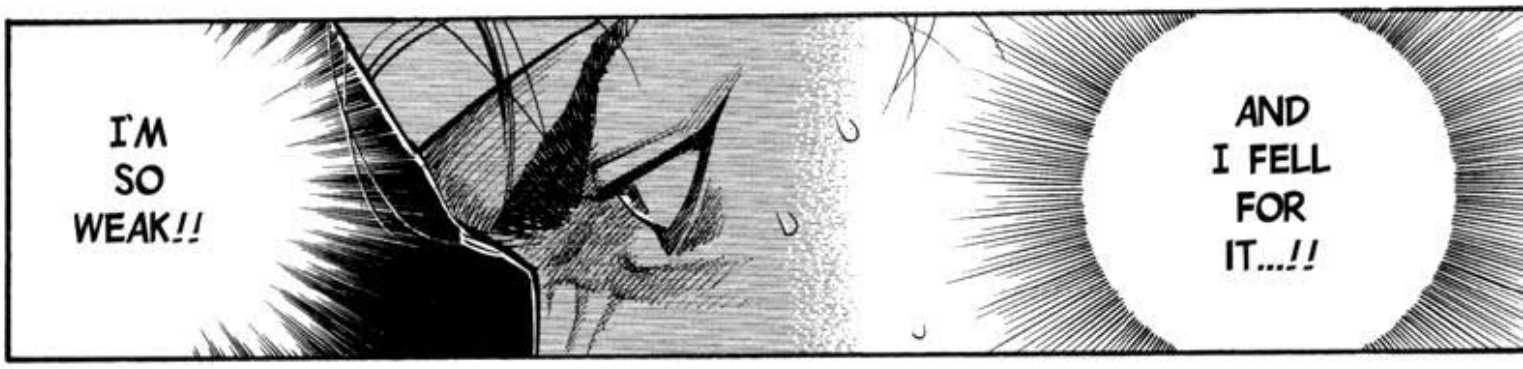
...

SMIRK

KRAKK

HA HA HA HA HA!!
IF THIS WERE A REAL MATCH, YOU'D BE DEAD, HUH?

NO! IT WAS FAIR.
IN ORDER TO WIN, IN ORDER TO SURVIVE...
IT WAS A VALID MOVE.
THAT WAS--
KRICH
HUH?


I'M SO WEAK!!
AND I FELL FOR IT...!!

GOOD THING IT WAS A ROTTEN STICK...
GOOD THING I WAS YOUR OPPONENT.
HA HA HA
...
KRAK

TUMP
WHAT'S WRONG WITH ME!?
TUMP
TMP
HUH?
HEY, MUSASHI, WAIT...

TUMP
JUST BECAUSE I KILLED A BUNCH OF SCRUBS AT THE YOSHIOKA SCHOOL.
TUMP
A MERE FOUR YEARS OF TRAINING...

KRICH
PRE-OCCUPIED WITH OTSŪ...
KRAK
KRICH
WHAT AM I DOING!?
JUST BECAUSE I SURVIVED A FIGHT WITH DENSHICHIRŌ, I'VE BECOME ARROGANT!!
I'M SUCH A FOOL!!

I'M A SPINELESS BASTARD!!

YOU FOOL! THAT WATER'S FREEZING COLD.
HA HA HA

GLUGLUG

SPLISSH

GET OUT OF HERE!!
YOU SPINELESS BASTARD!!

ZHOOP

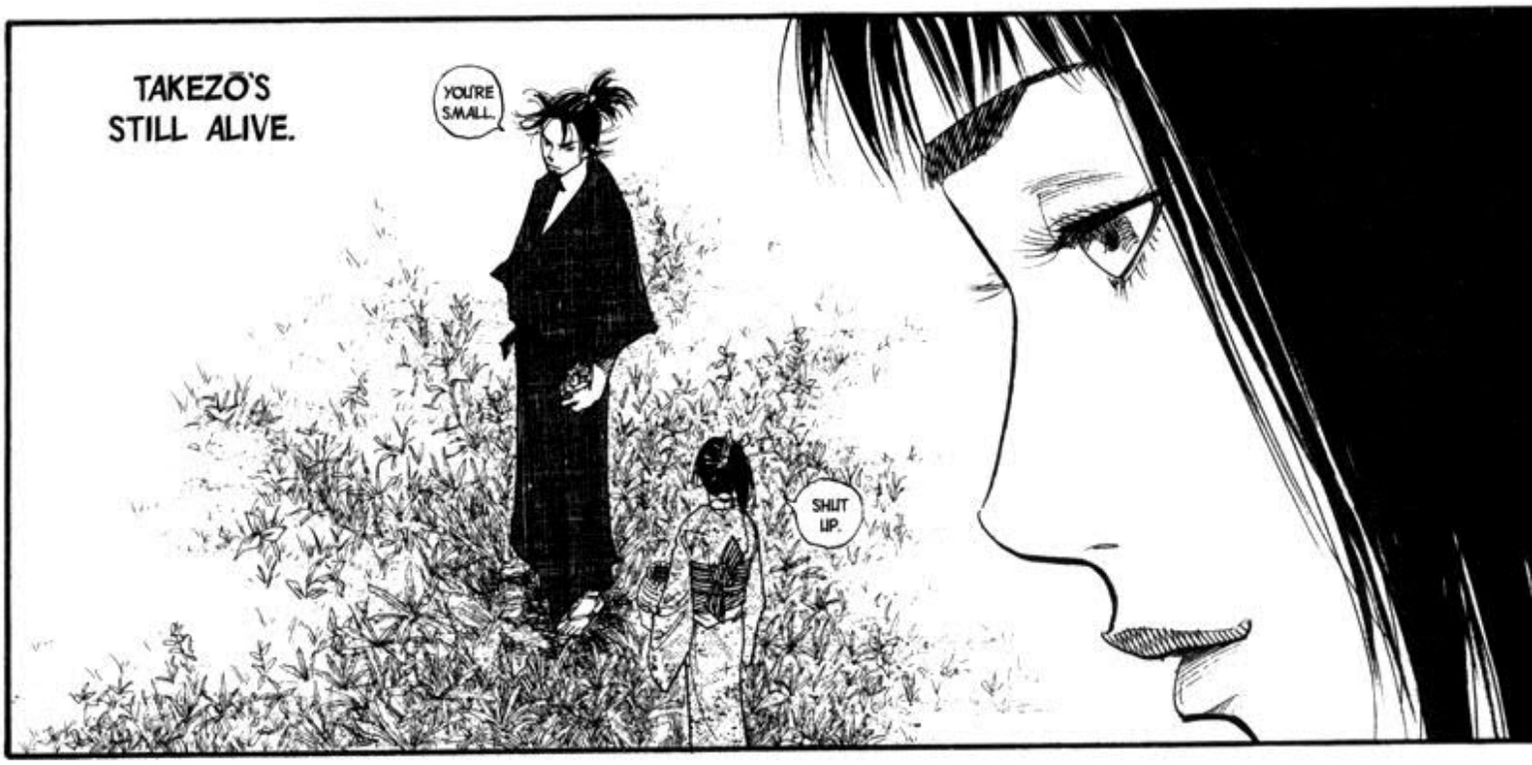
WHUD
ARGH!

...
TP
TP

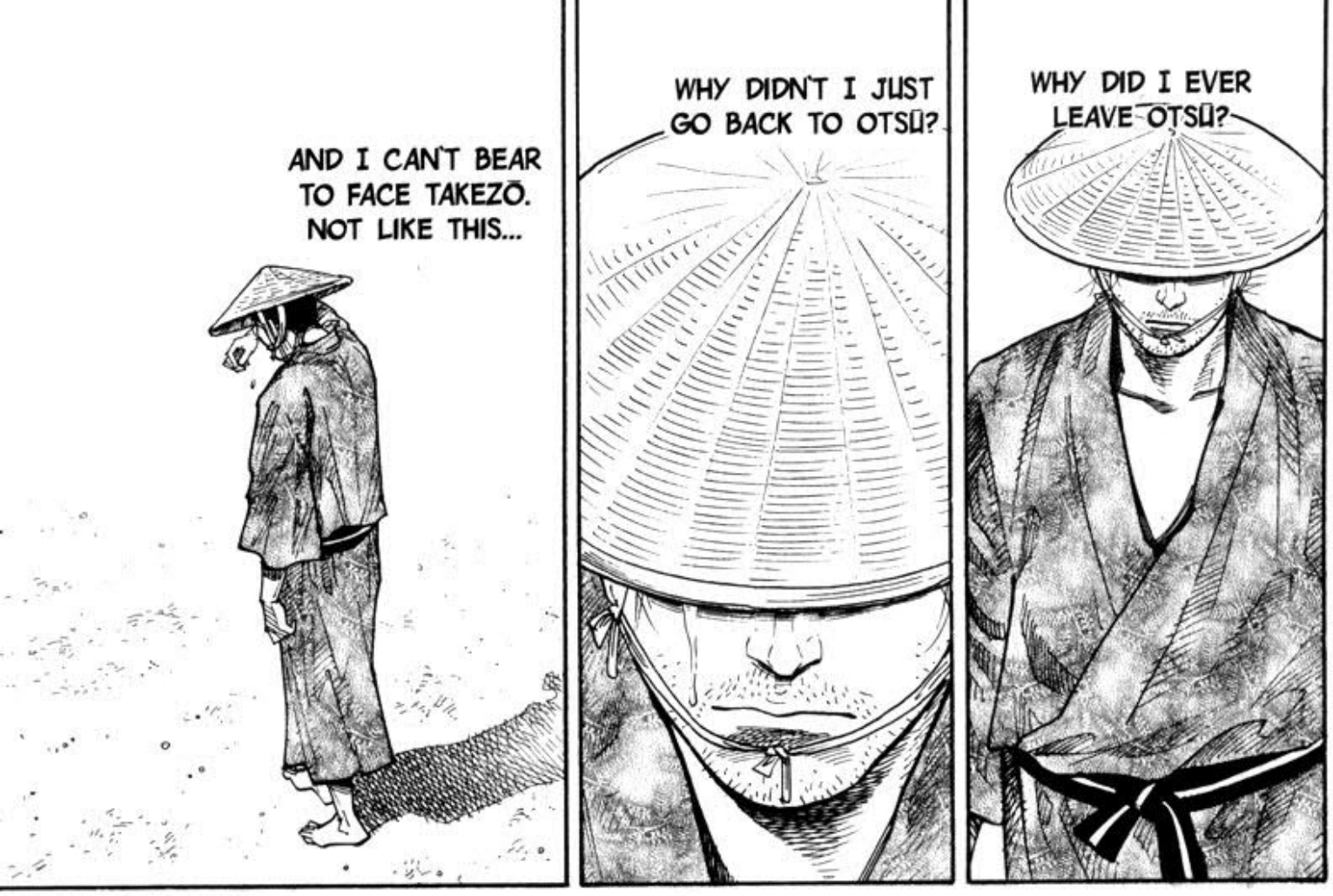
OKŌ! LET ME IN!
HOW DARE YOU!?

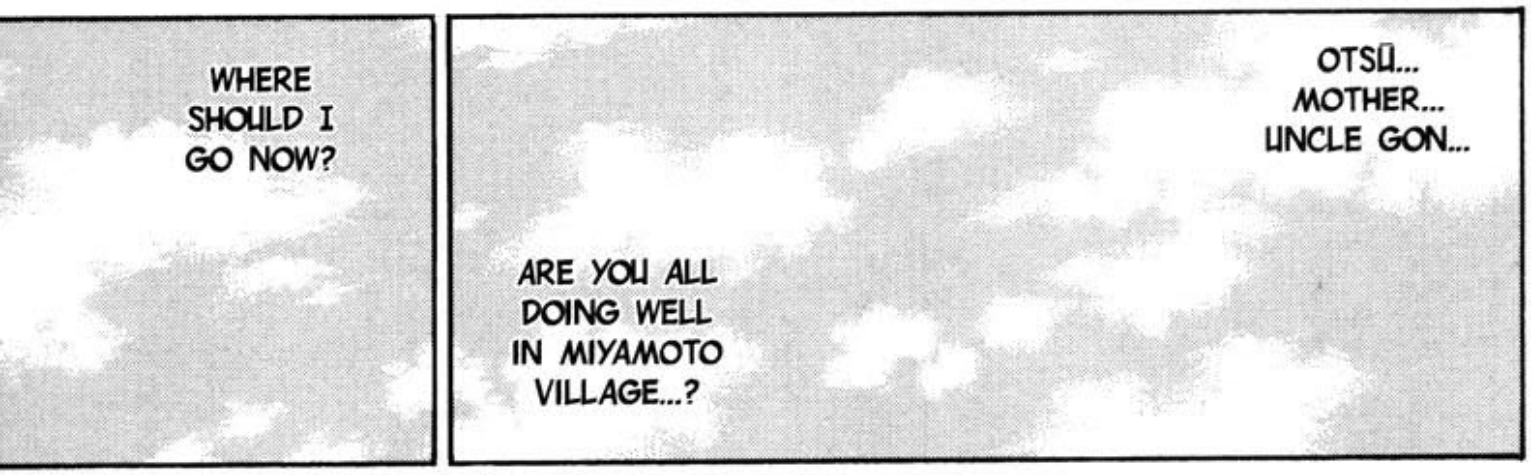
DON'T YOU *EVER* COME BACK!!
THEY'RE MY PRECIOUS CUSTOMERS!
KEEPING YOU HERE WOULD MAKE *ME* AN ENEMY OF THE YOSHIOKA SCHOOL!!

TAKEZŌ...
AKEMI, DON'T TELL ME YOU'VE BEEN WAITING FOR HIM...
...ALL THIS TIME...


TAKEZŌ'S STILL ALIVE.
YOU'RE SMALL.
SHUT UP.

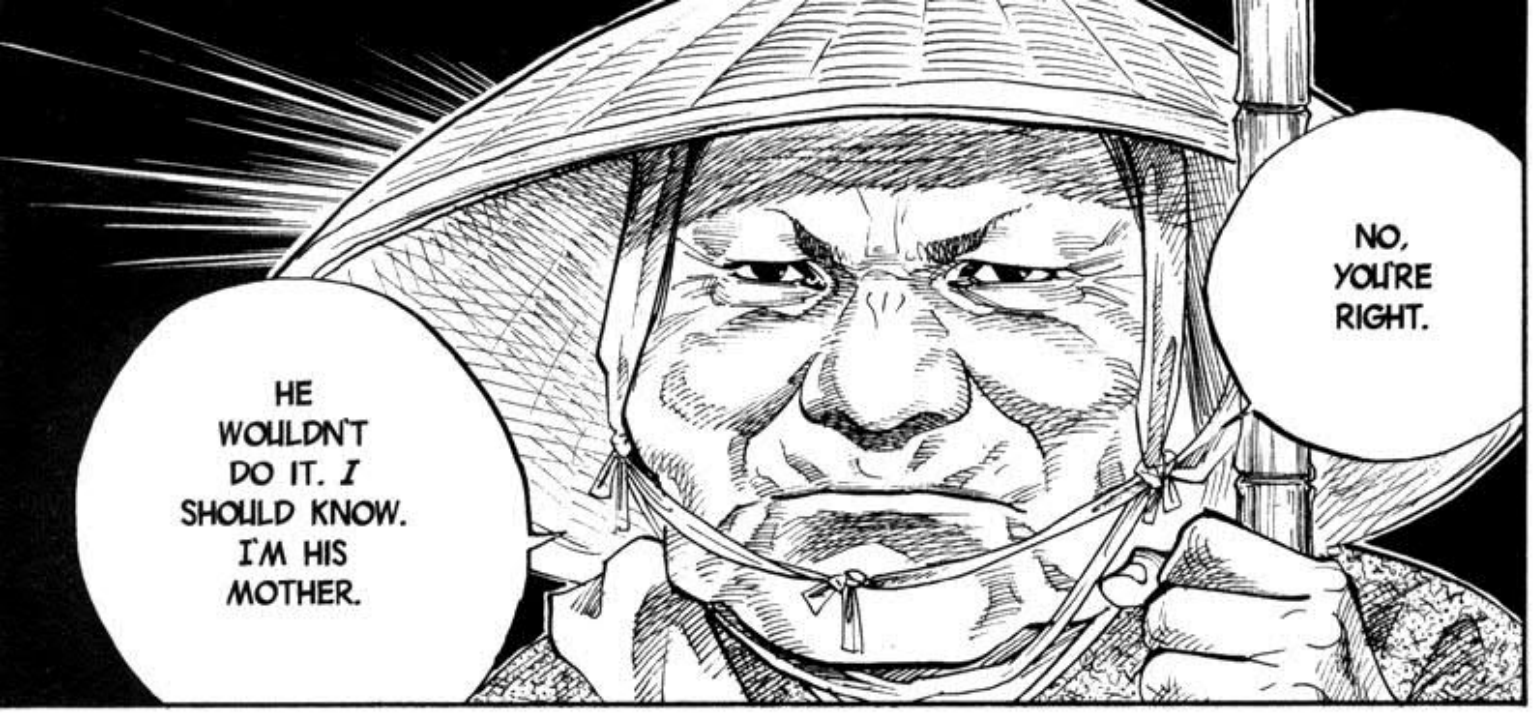
LIKE A STRAY DOG!
I'VE BEEN THROWN OUT...
FOR US TO LEAVE KYOTO...
THE TIME HAS COME...
EVER SINCE SEKIGAHARA, THOSE TWO HAVE BEEN NOTHING BUT BAD LUCK.


AND I CAN'T BEAR TO FACE TAKEZŌ. NOT LIKE THIS...
WHY DIDN'T I JUST GO BACK TO OTSŪ?
WHY DID I EVER LEAVE OTSŪ?


WHERE SHOULD I GO NOW?
ARE YOU ALL DOING WELL IN MIYAMOTO VILLAGE...?
OTSŪ... MOTHER... UNCLE GON...

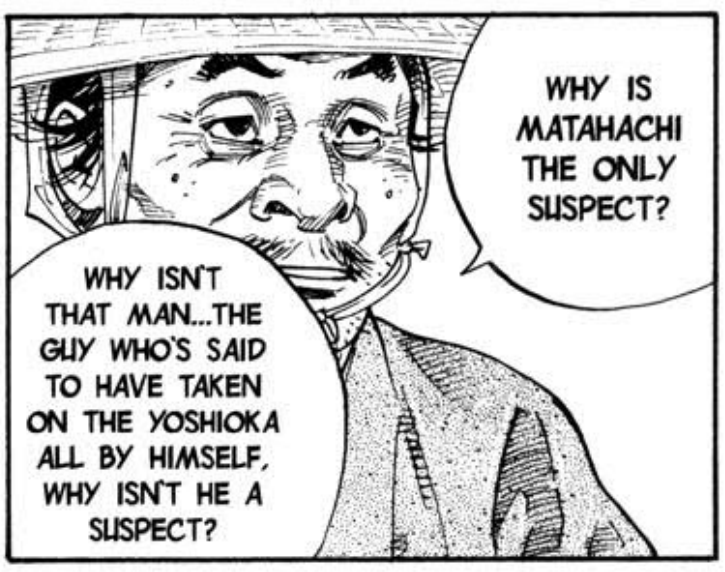
I WANT TO GO BACK TO MIYAMOTO VILLAGE...!!

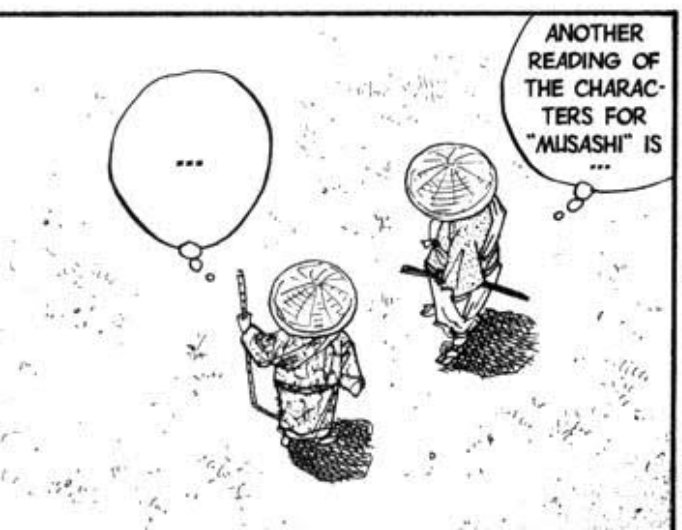
AN UNPARDONABLE OFFENSE AGAINST OUR ANCESTORS...!!
WE HAVE A CRIMINAL IN THE HON'IDEN FAMILY!!
人相書
本位田又八
(WANTED: HON'IDEN MATAHACHI)
HEY...
MMBL
HOLD ON, GRANNY!!
MMBL
MMBL
IT'S FINALLY HAPPENED...
WAIT A MINUTE, GRANNY!!
THE ONLY THING LEFT FOR ME TO DO IS...
CHAK
THIS COULD BE A MISTAKE!!
AHHH! LET GO!
WELL, I DON'T KNOW, BUT...
WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY THAT, UNCLE GON?
A MISTAKE!?
!!
D-DON'T TAKE IT THE WRONG WAY...
...
I MEAN, HE'D HAVE TO BE PRETTY GUTSY TO DO SOMETHING LIKE THAT.
DO YOU THINK THAT MATAHACHI WOULD EVEN TRY TO BURN DOWN THAT FAMOUS YOSHIOKA SCHOOL?


NO, YOU'RE RIGHT.
HE WOULDN'T DO IT. I SHOULD KNOW. I'M HIS MOTHER.

THAT MAN CALLED "MIYAMOTO MUSASHI."
MIYAMOTO MUSASHI...

...


WHY IS MATAHACHI THE ONLY SUSPECT?
WHY ISN'T THAT MAN...THE GUY WHO'S SAID TO HAVE TAKEN ON THE YOSHIOKA ALL BY HIMSELF, WHY ISN'T HE A SUSPECT?


...
ANOTHER READING OF THE CHARACTERS FOR "MUSASHI" IS ...

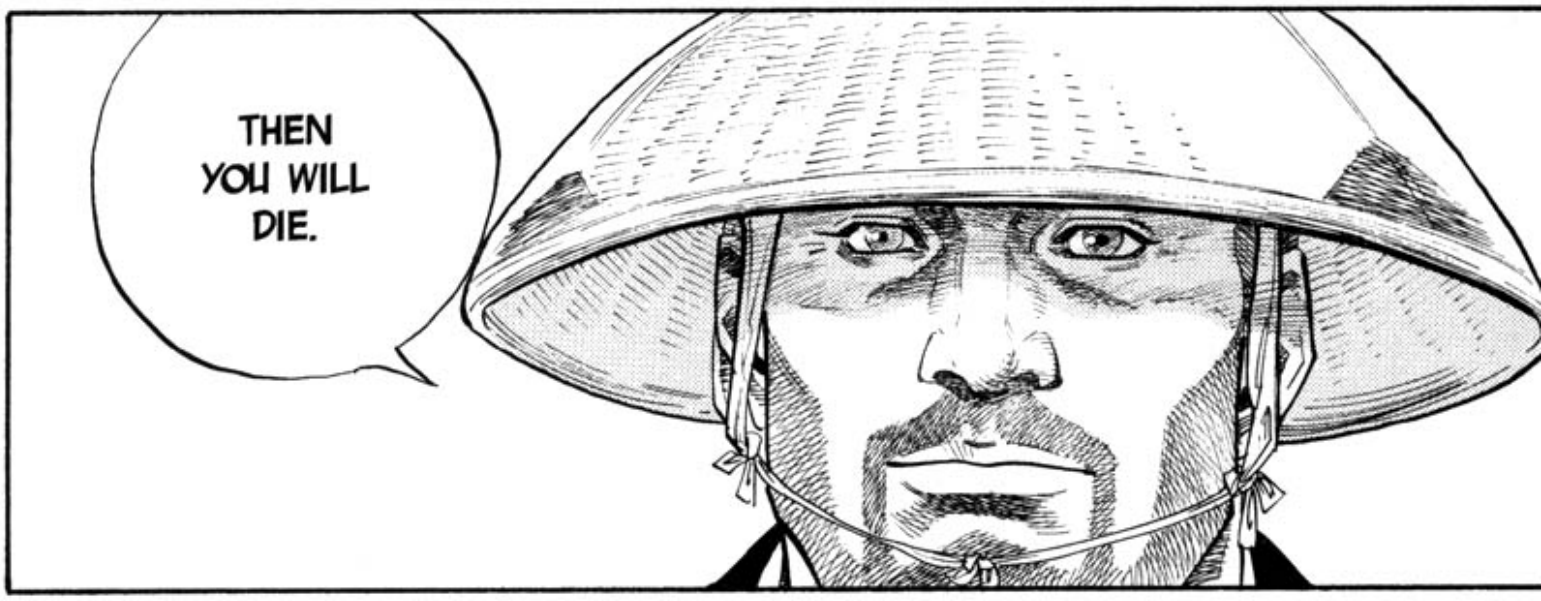
"MUSASHI"...
...OF MIYAMOTO VILLAGE...?

MIYAMOTO ...
... MUSASHI?

TAKEZŌ!?

I'M DEVOTED TO THE WAY OF THE SWORD.
...MAYBE IT WOULDN'T HAVE MADE A DIFFERENCE IF SHE CAME WITH YOU...
OTSU'S DISTRACTING YOU, AND SHE'S NOT EVEN HERE.
FWAP
ARE YOU IN LOVE WITH HER?
HMPH!
THE MORE ONE TRIES TO LOOK AWAY, THE MORE ONE GETS PREOCCUPIED.
ONCE YOUR HEART IS PREOCCUPIED...

...YOUR SWORD WILL NOT BE TRUE.


THEN YOU WILL DIE.

LIKE JUST NOW...
...YOU FROZE UP WHEN I MENTIONED OTSŪ.

KRICH
...!!
YOU CARRY EVERYTHING RIGHT HERE...

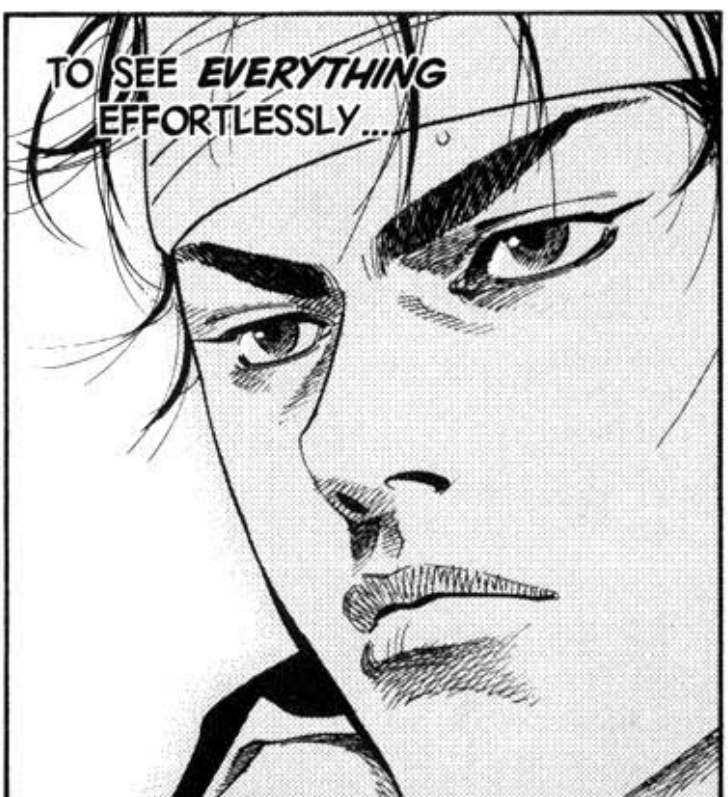
PREOCCUPIED WITH A SINGLE LEAF...
...YOU WON'T SEE THE TREE.
PREOCCUPIED WITH A SINGLE TREE... YOU'LL MISS THE ENTIRE FOREST.

DON'T BE PREOCCUPIED WITH A SINGLE SPOT.
SEE EVERYTHING IN ITS ENTIRETY...
...EFFORTLESSLY ...

THAT IS WHAT IT MEANS... TO TRULY "SEE."

I'VE HAD ENOUGH.
I'M DI-GRESSING.
YOU WANTED TO TALK ABOUT OTSŪ.

MATAHACHI LEFT HER.
THEY'RE FINISHED.
BESIDES, SHE WAS *MATAHACHI'S* FIANCÉE.


TO SEE *EVERYTHING* EFFORTLESSLY...

OTSŪ...
SHE'S WITH THE YAGYŪ CLAN.

AND YOU CALL YOURSELF A MONK.
...

MAN AND WOMAN ...
YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO IGNORE YOUR "FEELINGS" FOREVER.
HEE HEE

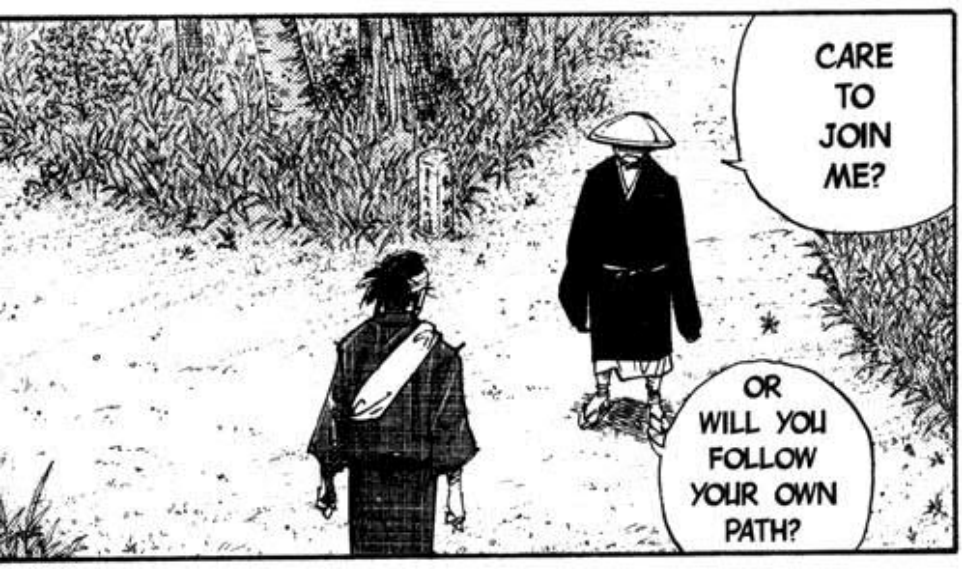
THE YAGYŪ!?

THE MORE YOU LOOK AWAY, THE MORE YOU'LL BE DRAWN IN.
YOU CAN'T DEFY NATURE.

Vagabond

(LET GO!)
はなせー

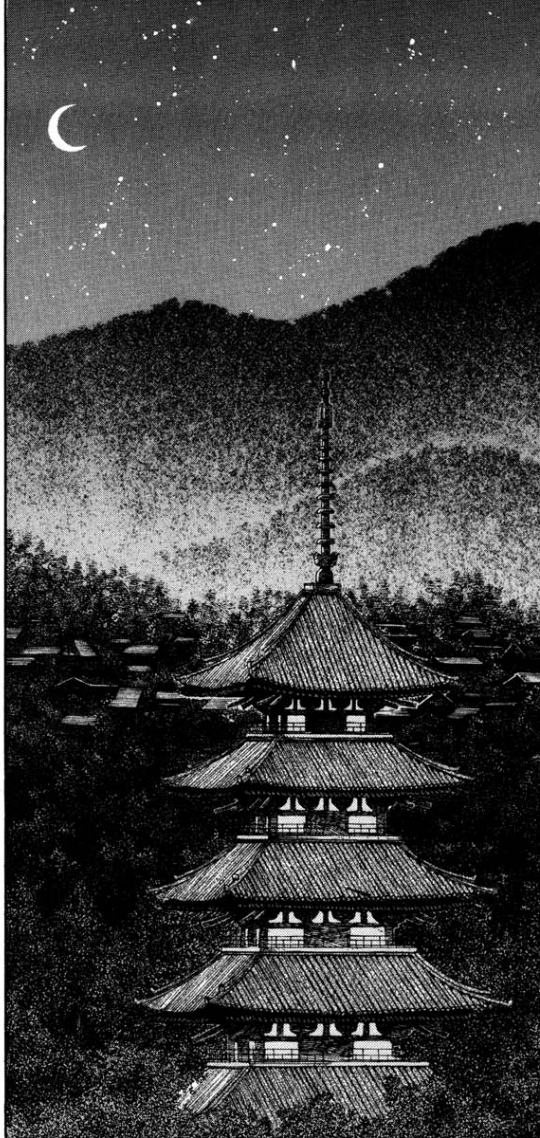
WELL, MUSASHI...
THIS IS WHERE WE GO OUR SEPARATE WAYS.
I'M GOING TO PAY THE YAGYŪ A VISIT.


CARE TO JOIN ME?
OR WILL YOU FOLLOW YOUR OWN PATH?

THE YAGYŪ!

...

#36 | Hōzōin



HŌZŌIN TEMPLE--A SUB-TEMPLE LOCATED ON THE GROUNDS OF KŌFUKUJI TEMPLE IN NARA.
BONG
BONG
BONG
BONG
HŌZŌIN TEMPLE IS RENOWNED FOR THE FEROCIOUS SPEAR TECHNIQUE PRACTICED BY ITS MONKS.

BACK WHEN I WAS SEVENTEEN, EVERYONE SHUNNED ME. PEOPLE CALLED ME... DEMON.
BUT AS A SWORDSMAN...
FWICH
FWICH
...I WAS COMPLETELY DEVOTED. I WAS STRONGER BACK THEN.

WICKED THOUGHTS?
THESE WICKED THOUGHTS...
THEY'RE DISTRACTING ME FROM THE WAY OF THE SWORD.
BUT NOW, I'M PREOCCUPIED WITH OTSŪ.

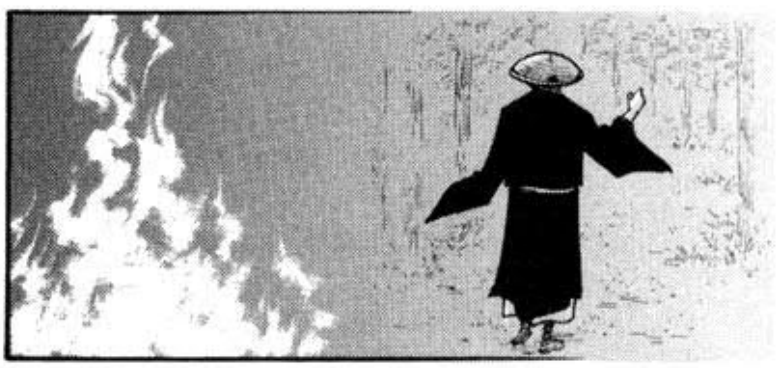
YOUR THOUGHTS AREN'T WICKED. THEY'RE PERFECTLY NATURAL FEELINGS.
YOU *THINK* THESE FEELINGS GO AGAINST THE WAY OF THE WARRIOR. BUT THEY ONLY GET TWISTED AND BENT OUT OF SHAPE WHEN YOU REPRESS THEM AND TRY TO KEEP THEM CONTAINED.
IT'S JUST THAT...
MY THOUGHTS ABOUT HER *ARE.*
NO!!
ARE YOU SUGGESTING THAT OTSŪ IS *WICKED?*
I DIDN'T SAY THAT!

AND THE MAN WHO PULLS PRANKS ON ME, *THAT* IS ALSO MUSASHI.
MUSASHI...
YOU ARE THE MAN WHO DRIVES HIMSELF TO ALL MANNER OF EXTREMES IN PURSUIT OF THE WAY OF THE SWORD.
YOU ARE ALSO THE MAN WHO DREAMS OF OTSŪ AND AGONIZES HIMSELF OVER IT.

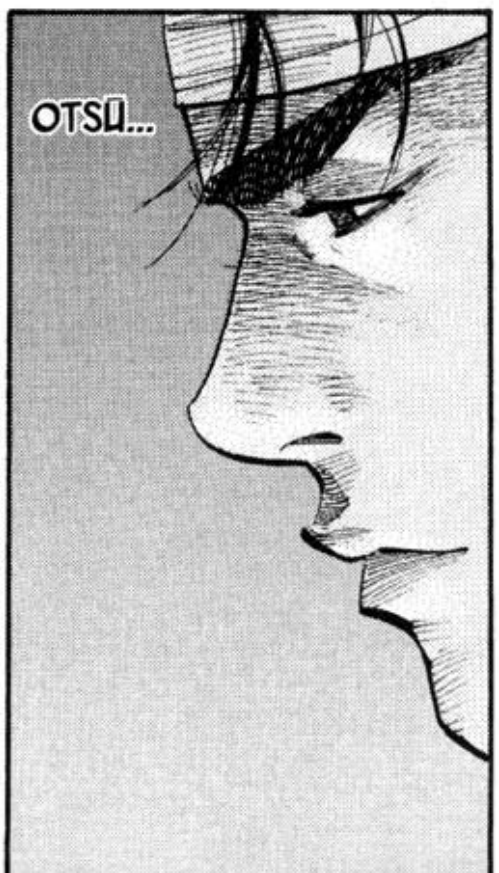
ALL THOSE MEN ARE ASPECTS OF YOUR SELF.
THEY'RE ALL A PART OF YOU.

BE AWARE OF YOURSELF.
AND ACCEPT YOURSELF AS YOU ARE.
SHUFF
THAT IS WHERE YOUR TRAINING SHOULD BEGIN.

KRAKK!
KRAK



I WANT TO HOLD YOU IN MY ARMS...
I MISS YOU...


OTSU...

I FEEL
SO ALONE...

CHIRPP
CHIRP

FWISH
PLISH
PLISH

HAH!!

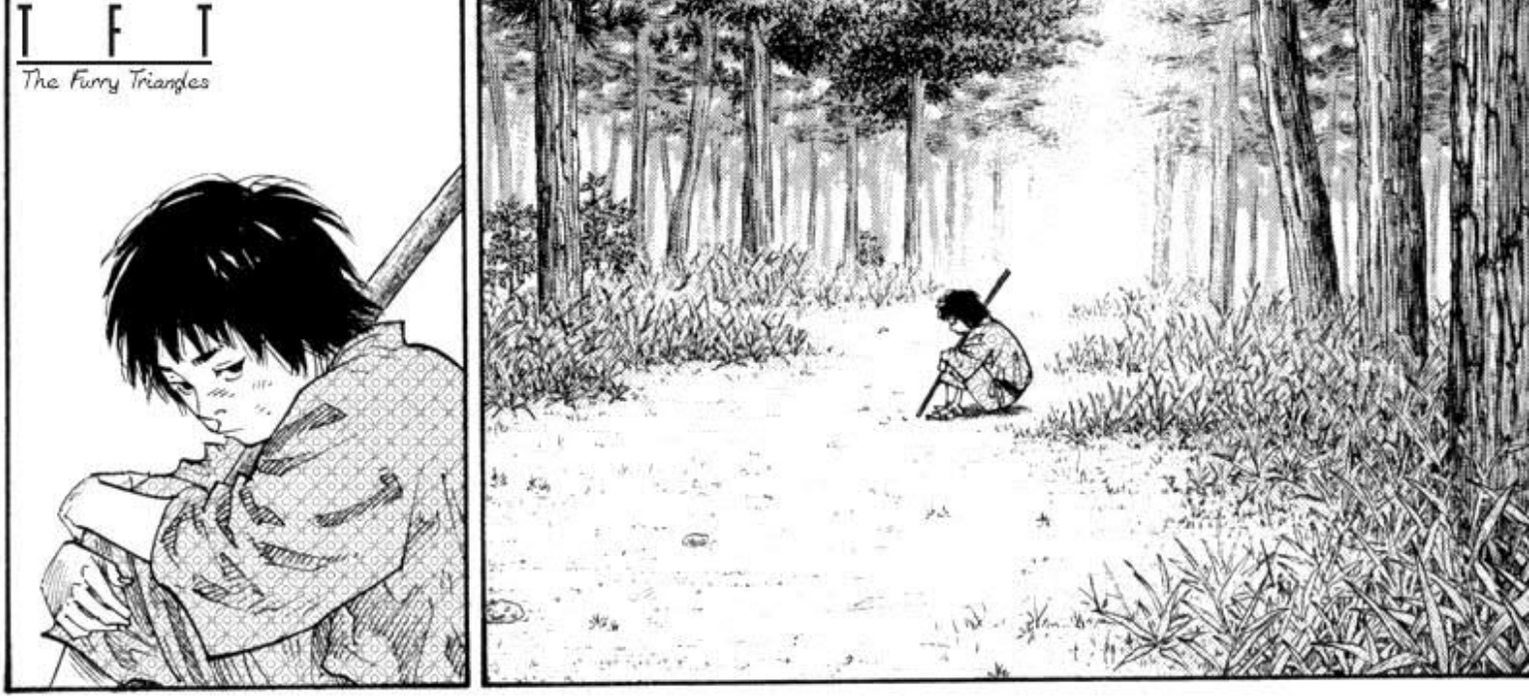
SEIJŪRŌ!!
FWICH
I WILL DEFEAT YOU BOTH, I SWEAR IT!!
SHOOM
FWISH
WOSH
DENSHICHIRŌ!!

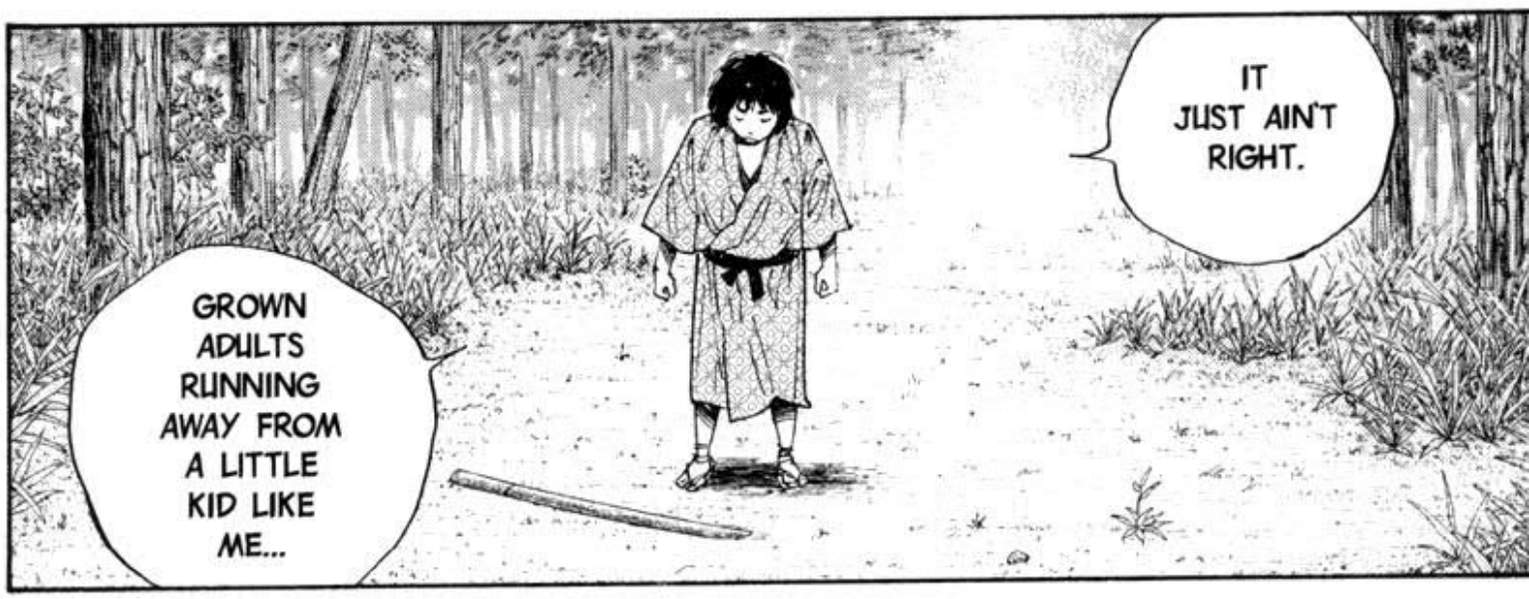
GASP!
!!
FWOOSH

THE STRONGER THE BETTER!!
KRICH
KRICH
KRICH
I WILL DEFEAT THEM!!
KRICH
I NEED TO FIND STRONG OPPONENTS!!

AND I'LL WIN NO MATTER WHAT!!
KRICH

I'M GOING TO BECOME INVINCIBLE!!
KRICH




GROWN ADULTS RUNNING AWAY FROM A LITTLE KID LIKE ME...
IT JUST AIN'T RIGHT.

...
FUMP

...!!
DON'T HAVE PARENTS.
YOU FOLLOWED ME ALL THIS WAY...?
CAN YOU FIND YOUR WAY BACK TO YOUR PARENTS?
WELL THEN, THE OWNER OF THE TAVERN MUST BE WORRIED ABOUT YOU.
HE SEEMED LIKE A GOOD GUY.
...
...
SNF
SNF
...
H-HE...
SNF
SNF
...
HE TOLD ME...

HE'S THE ONE WHO TOLD ME TO BECOME YOUR DISCIPLE.
SNIF
SNIF
HE WANTED ME TO LEAVE...
HE SAID, "GO AND SERVE THAT SAMURAI..."
SNIF

SNIF
I WORKED SO HARD FOR HIM, TOO...
BUT I WAS...
SNIF
I WAS JUST A NUISANCE TO HIM.

NOW I HAVE NO PLACE TO GO.
SO...
I WANT TO BECOME STRONG.
I HAVE TO BE ABLE TO SURVIVE BY MYSELF...WITHOUT ANYONE'S HELP.
SNIF
I HAVE TO BE STRONG.
THAT'S WHY I WANT TO BE YOUR DISCIPLE...
SNIF
THAT'S WHY I WANT TO BECOME A SAMURAI...!!

MASTER?
MASTER MIYAMOTO...

...

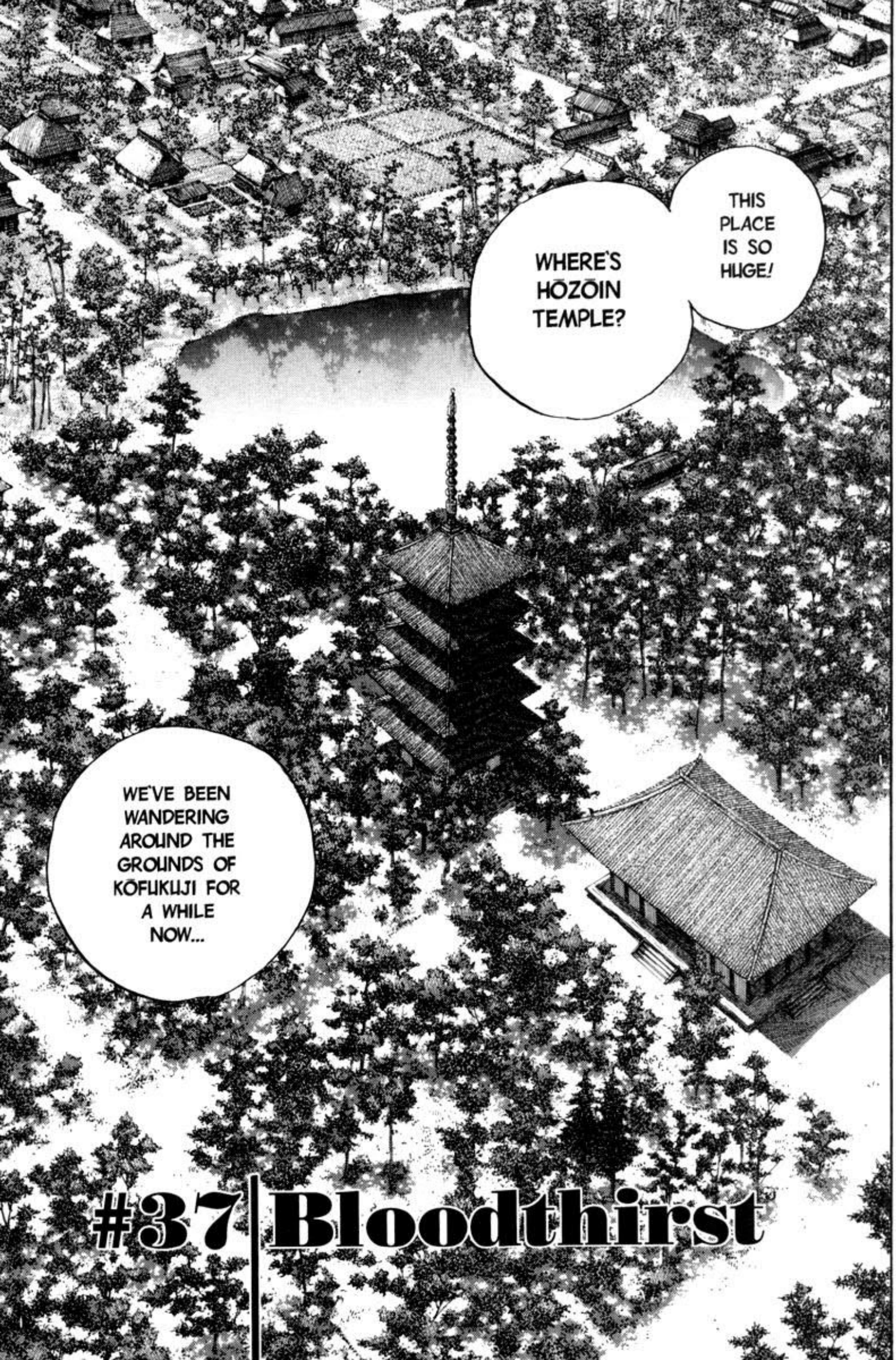
JŌTARŌ...
THERE'S THIS GIRL I'M IN LOVE WITH.
NEITHER OF *US* HAVE HOMES TO GO TO, EITHER.

I'VE COME TO REALIZE THAT *SHE'S* MY REASON FOR LIVING.
HUH?
BUT...
JŌTARŌ, LET'S BECOME STRONGER TOGETHER.

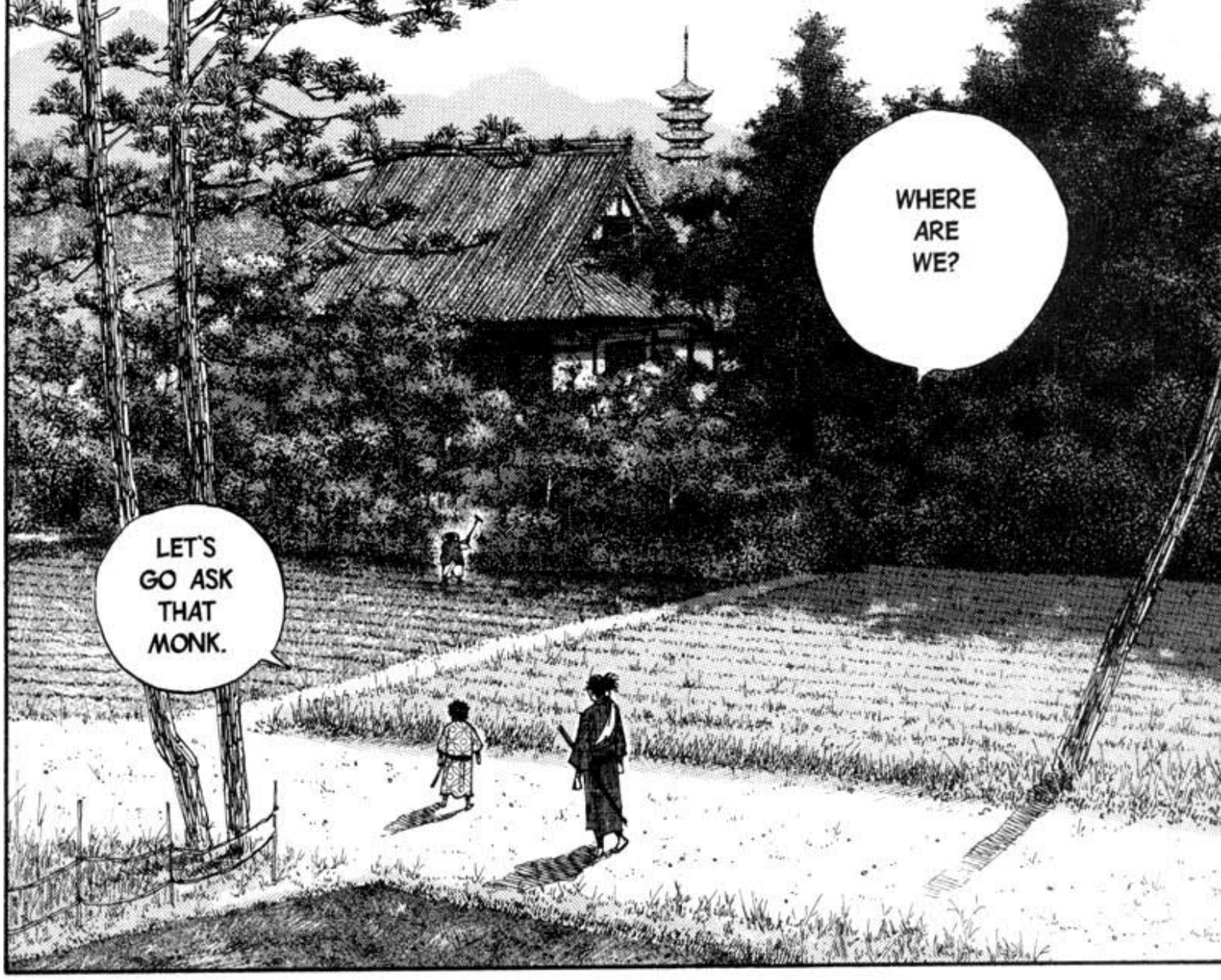
LET'S GO TO HŌZŌIN TEMPLE...
I'M GOING TO DEFEAT THEIR FAMOUS SPEAR TECHNIQUE.

Vagabond

(I'M CRYING AGAIN...)

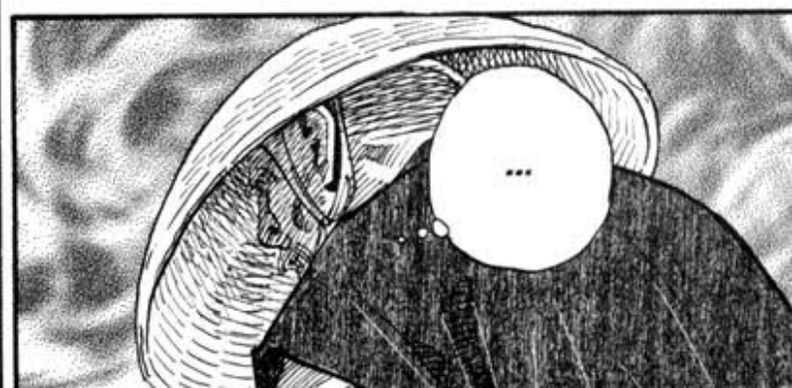


#37 | Bloodthirst


WHERE ARE WE?
LET'S GO ASK THAT MONK.

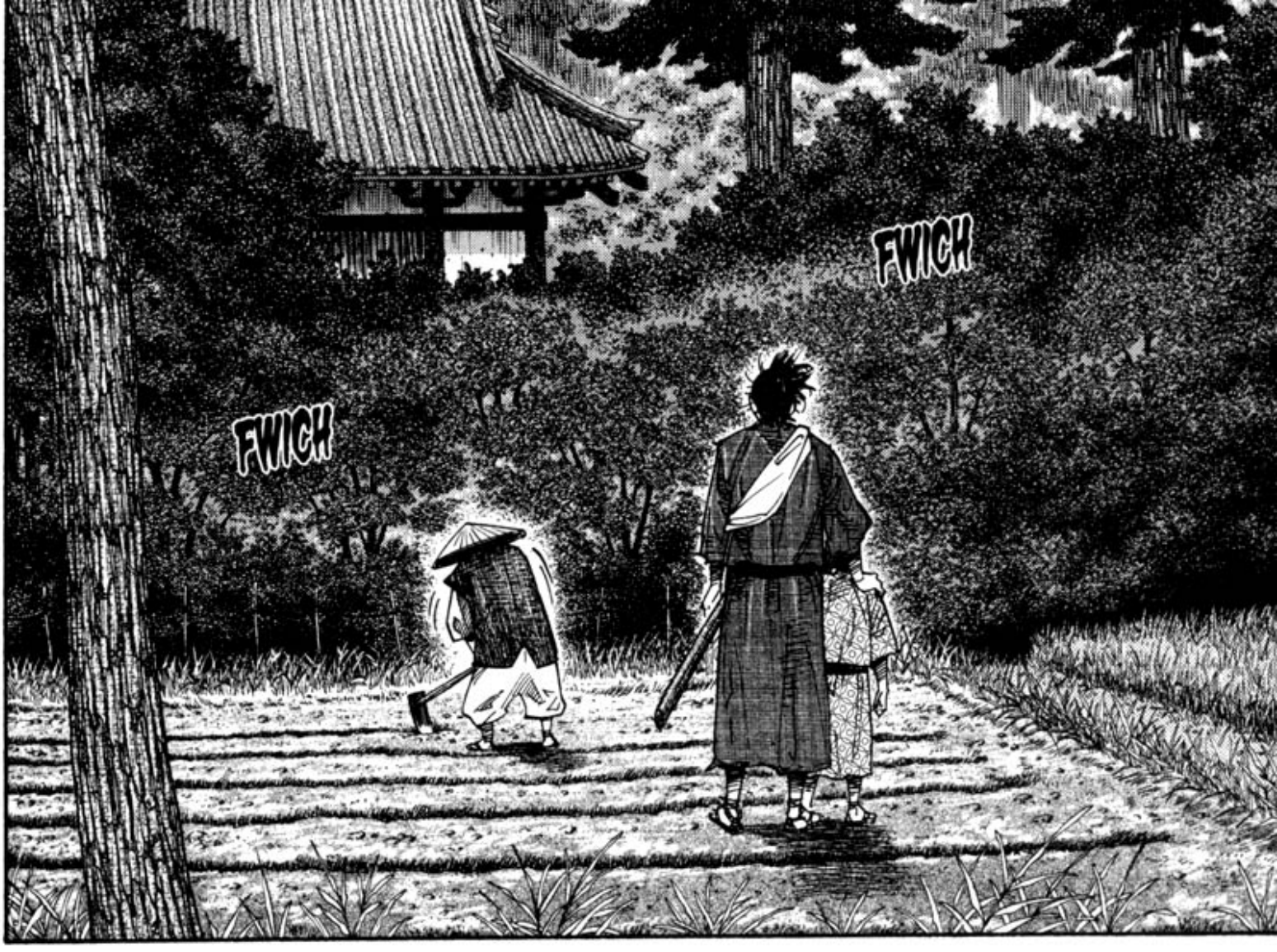
HEY!
DO YOU KNOW THE WAY TO HŌZŌIN?

KRICH
KRICH


...

THAT OLD MAN MUST BE DEAF.
TP TP TP
H-E-Y!!
FWICH
HUH?

!!
WHUNK
FWICH
JŌTARŌ! WAIT!
HUH?
FWOOSH


FWICH
FWICH

?

FWICH
FWICH

MASTER, WHAT'S WRONG?

HEY!

...

WHAT JUST HAPPENED?
I SENSED SUCH MURDEROUS BLOODTHIRST...
WAS IT JUST MY IMAGINATION? I THOUGHT HE WAS GOING TO ATTACK...

HRMPH!
YOUNG MAN...

MUCH BLOODTHIRST YOU HAVE.
HRMPH!

HUH?

YOU FEEL THE NEED TO CUT DOWN A DECREPIT OLD MAN, DO YOU?

THWOK
YAHHH!
!!
NNGH...
THWUNK

YOU'VE HAD THE PRIVILEGE...
...OF BEING DEFEATED BY AGON OF HŌZŌIN.

...

NEXT...

THAT'S ME.

THUD
AYAHHH!!
THUD
YAHHH!!

KRICH
...

THWAK

NNGH!
THUP
YAYAHH!!
THUP
THUP

YOU'VE HAD THE PRIVILEGE ...
...OF BEING DEFEATED BY AGON OF HŌZŌIN.
FSSHOOM

FP

MY FRIEND...
YOU WILL HAVE THE PRIVILEGE OF BEING CUT DOWN BY GION TŌJI!

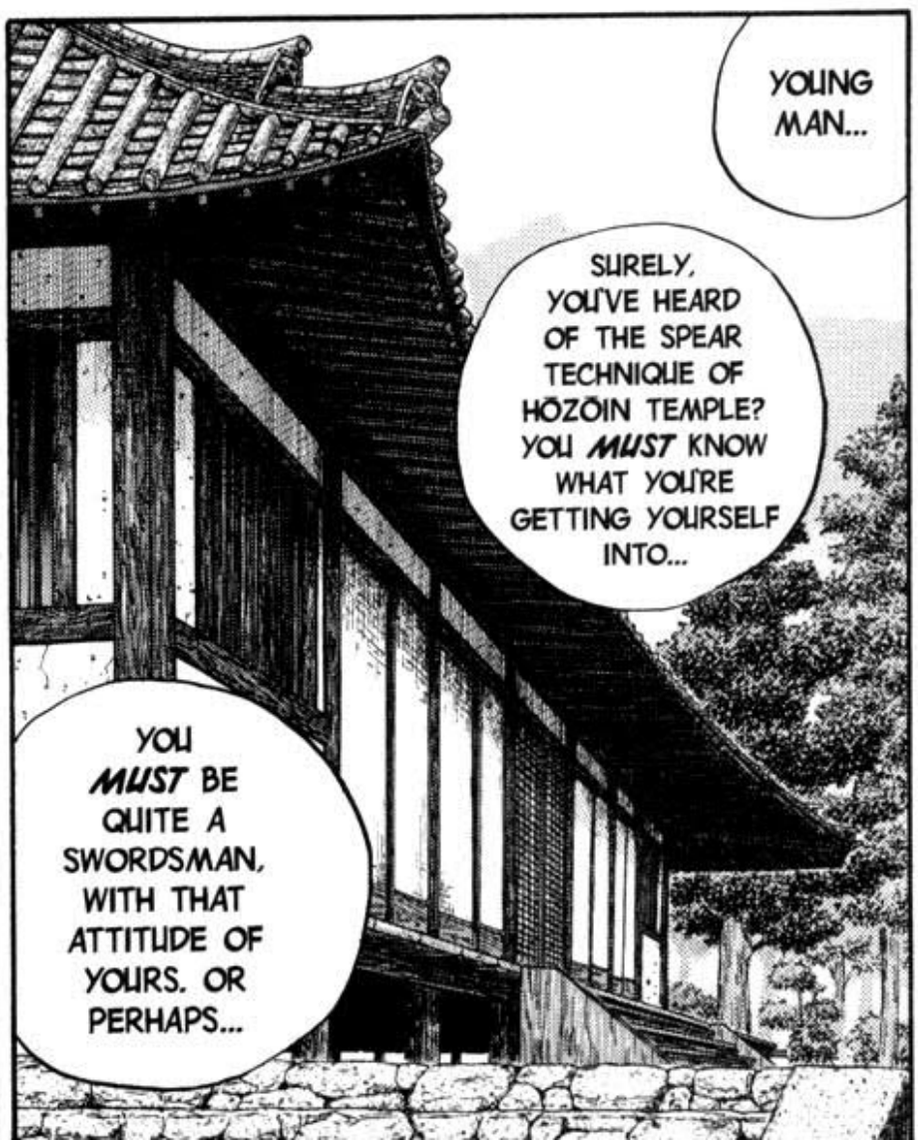
SORRY...
HEH HEH...
I JUST COULDN'T RESIST MIMICKING THAT LINE OF YOURS.
HUH!?

HMM...

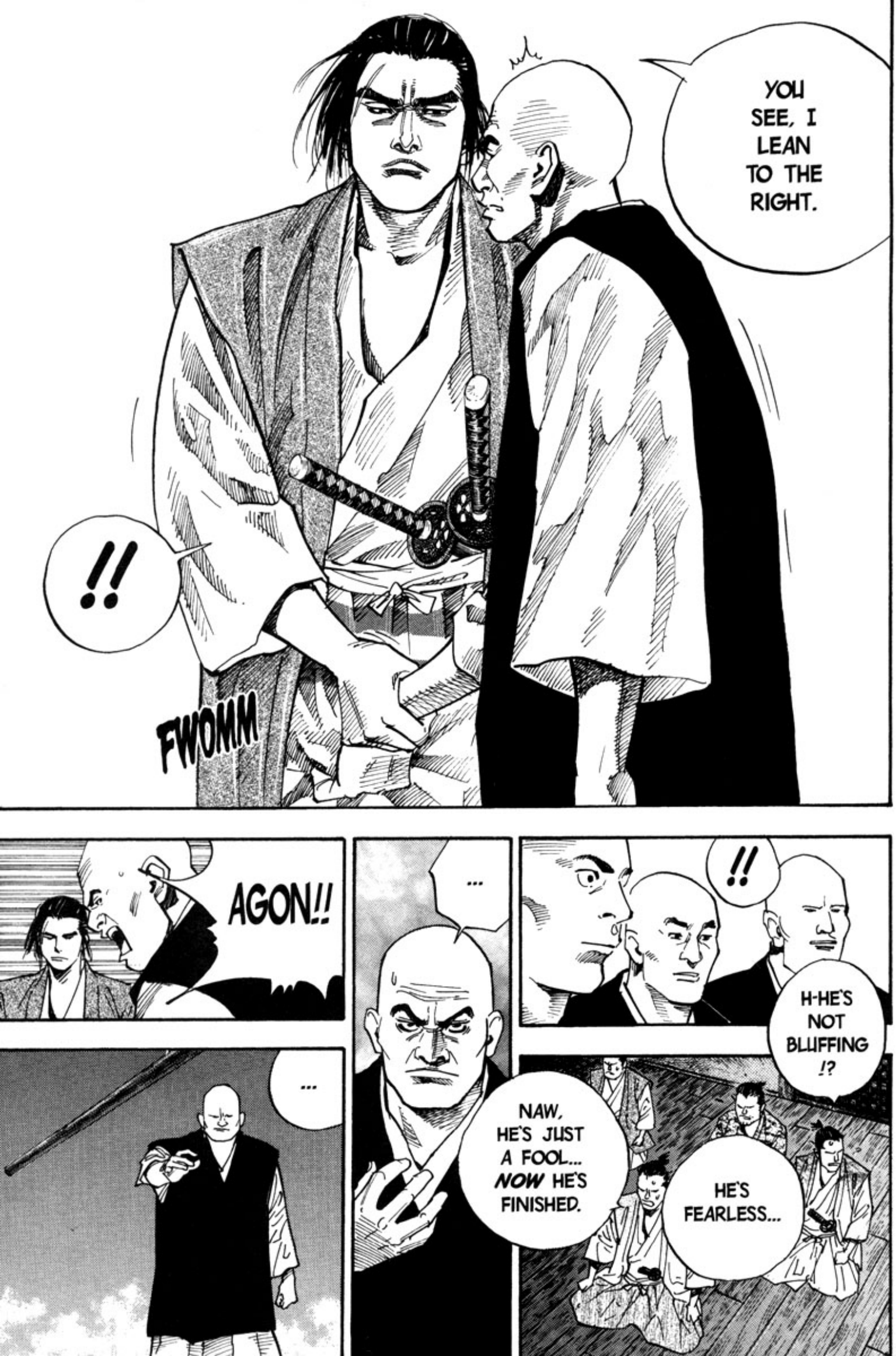
HMPH! MUSASHI'S NOT HERE...

THUP

FP


YOUNG MAN...
SURELY, YOU'VE HEARD OF THE SPEAR TECHNIQUE OF HŌZŌIN TEMPLE? YOU *MUST* KNOW WHAT YOU'RE GETTING YOURSELF INTO...
YOU *MUST* BE QUITE A SWORDSMAN, WITH THAT ATTITUDE OF YOURS. OR PERHAPS...

YOU'RE JUST ONE HELL OF AN ACTOR.
SMIRK
YOU'RE ALL SHRIVELED UP WITH FEAR!
HA HA HA HA HA!!
HA HA HA HA HA HA
BETTER GIVE YOUR SHORT SWORD A FEW ACTING LESSONS, TOO!!
MAYBE IF YOU BEG FOR OUR FORGIVENESS WE'LL LET YOU GO!!
SO VULGAR... SHAME ON YOU MONKS.
"YOUNG MAN," HUH?
EVERYONE ALWAYS SEEMS TO THINK MASTER SEIJŪRŌ AND I BOTH LOOK YOUNG FOR OUR AGES...
I'M PROBABLY THE SAME AGE AS YOU...
AND BESIDES, YOU'RE MISS-ING "THE POINT."
TUGG


YOU SEE, I LEAN TO THE RIGHT.
!!
FWOMM
AGON!!
...
!!
H-HE'S NOT BLUFFING !?
...
NAW, HE'S JUST A FOOL... NOW HE'S FINISHED.
HE'S FEARLESS...

FWICH

...
HMPH...
I SUPPOSE A GOOD FIGHT'LL BREAK THE MONOTONY OF MY TRAVELS.

!!
A REAL SWORD...!?
YOU PREFER A WOODEN PRACTICE SWORD, PERHAPS?
I DON'T CARE!! COME ON!!
RIGHT.
ZWING
THUP
THUP
THUP
YAAHHH!!

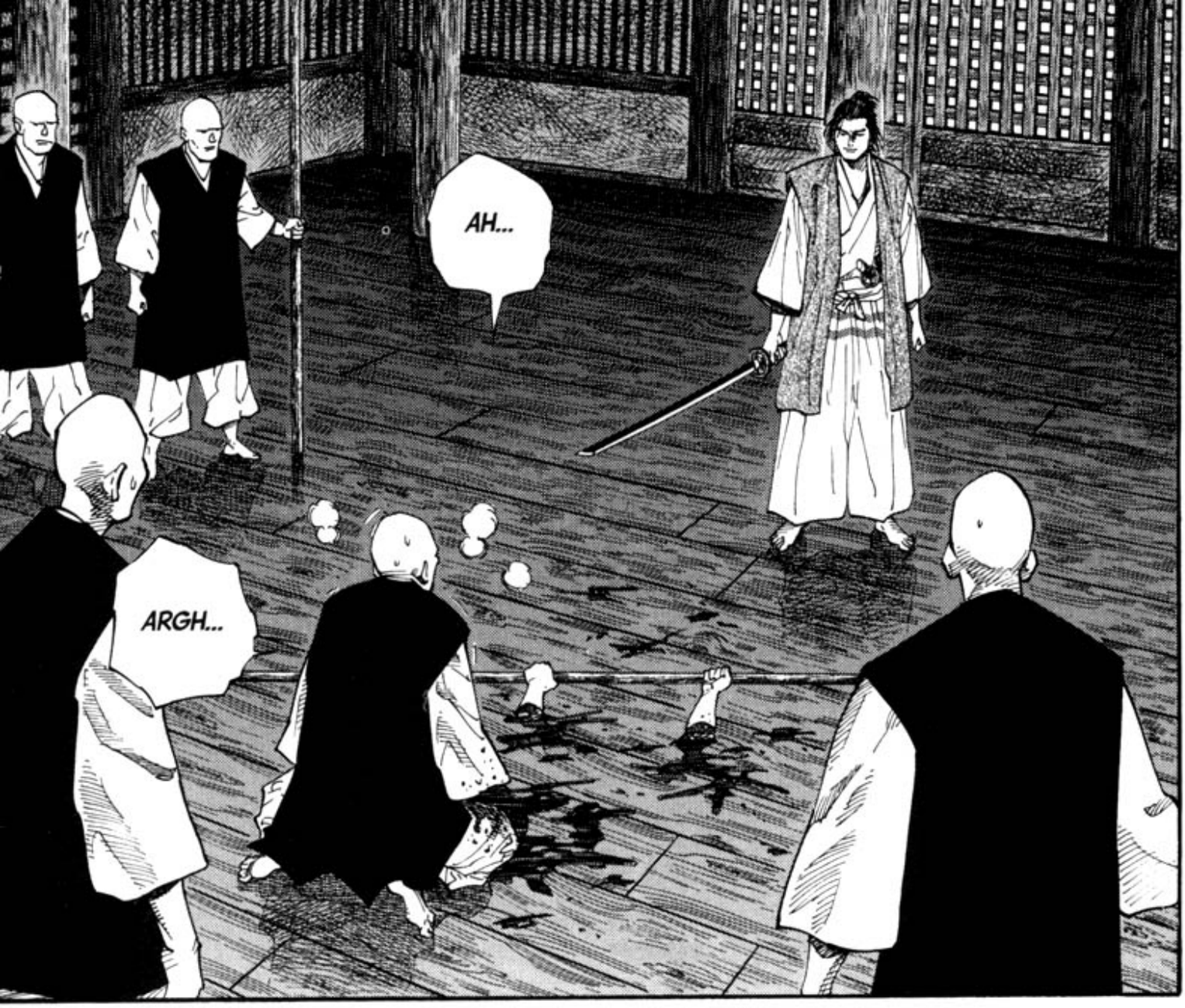
SLISSH

Vagabond

(HRMPH HRMPH.)
にやむにやむ

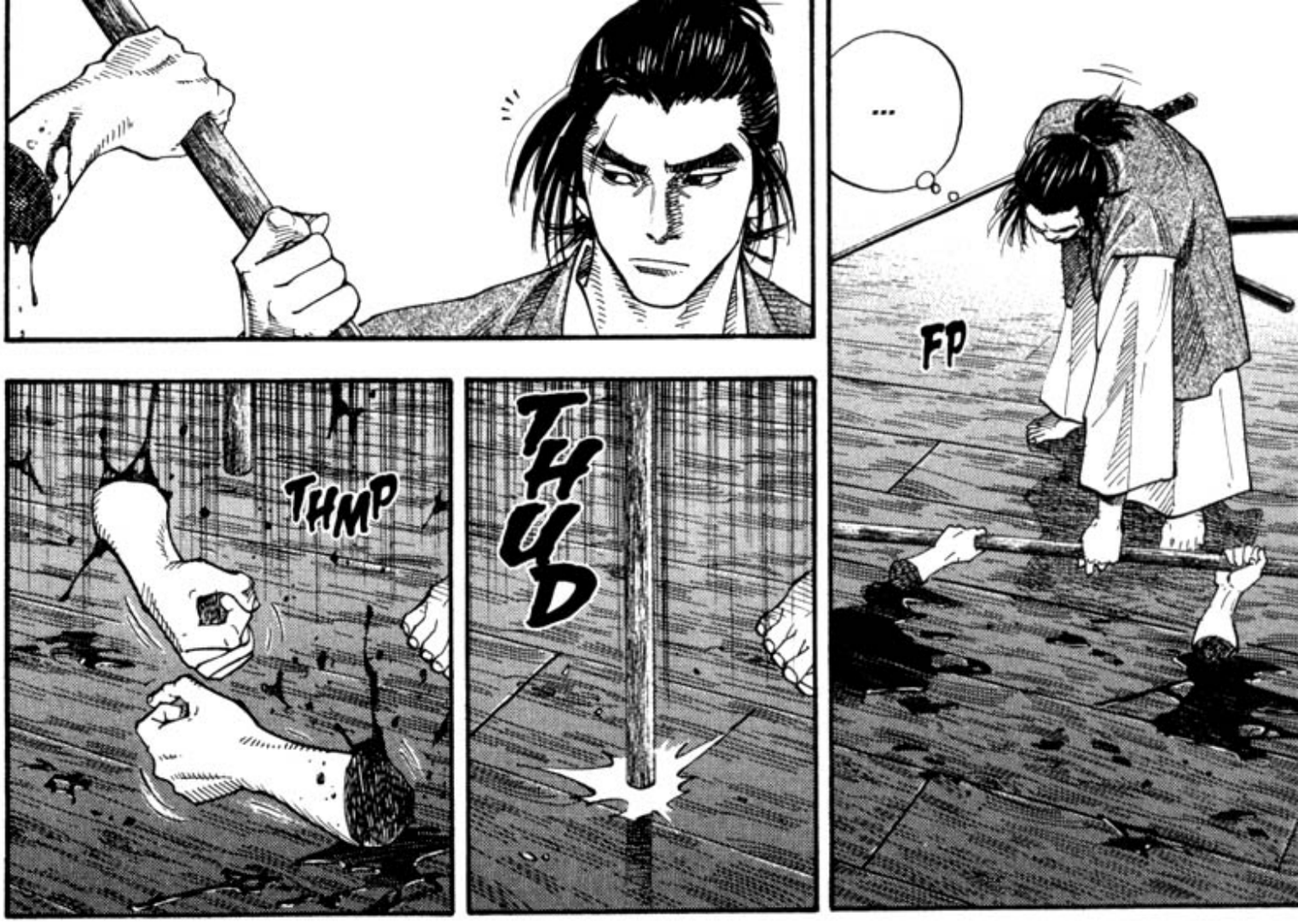
...

#38 Graceless


AH...
ARGH...

...

Y-
YOU...
YOU
BASTARD!!


...
FP
THMP
THUD

GASP!!

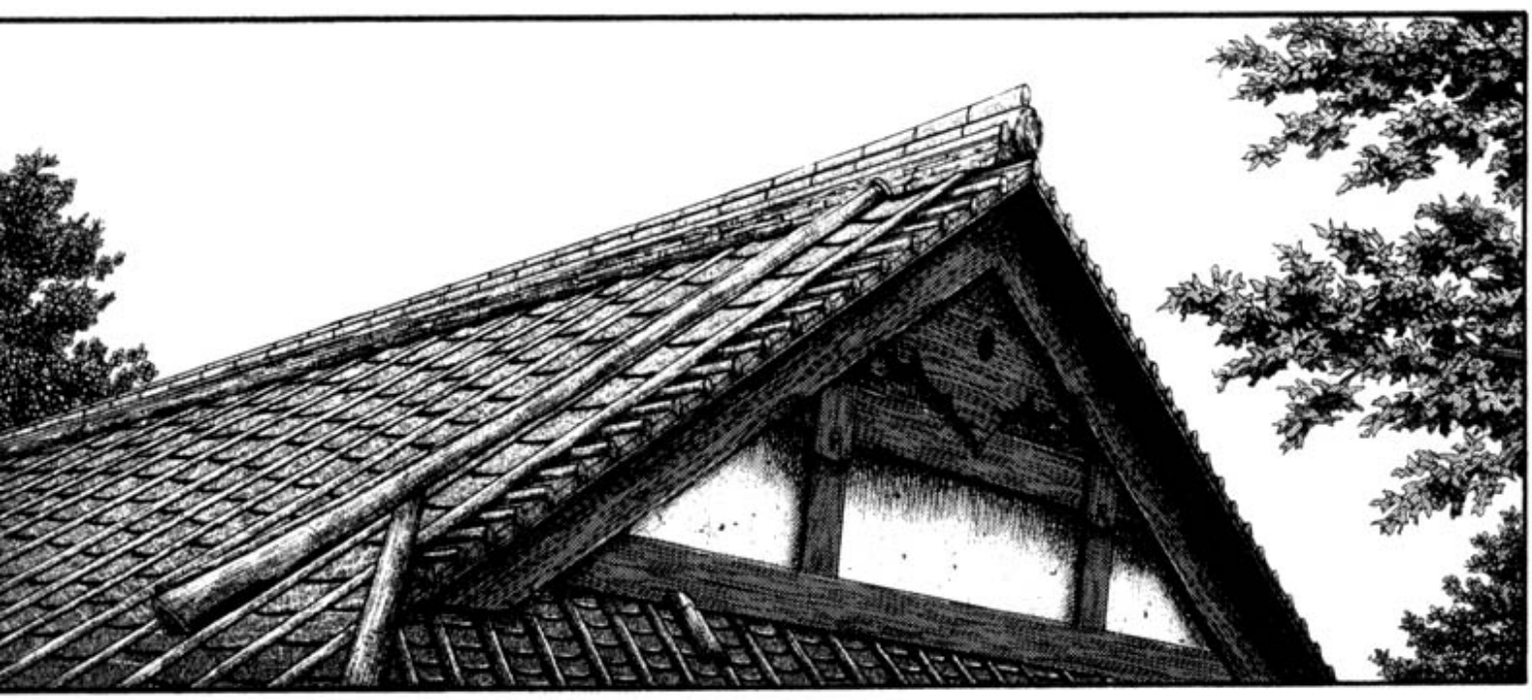
NEXT.
...!!
WELL, ALL RIGHT.
C'MON ...
FIP
...

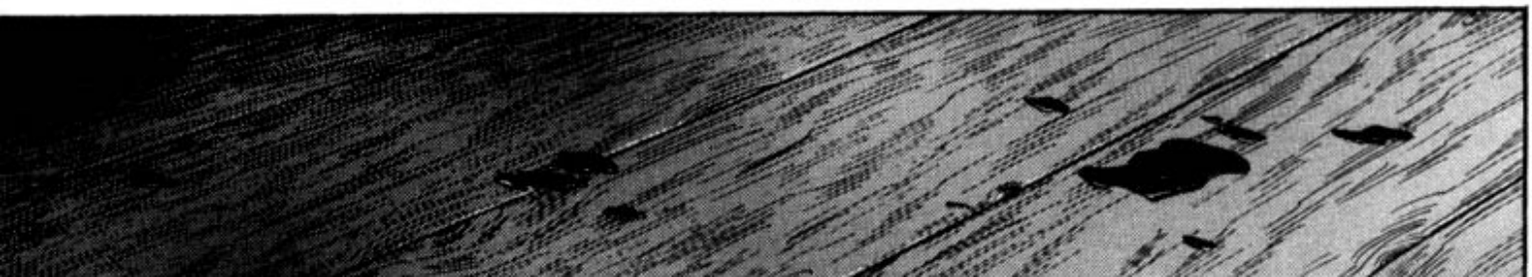
CHAK
ONE PERSON A DAY IS ENOUGH.

I'LL BE BACK TOMORROW.

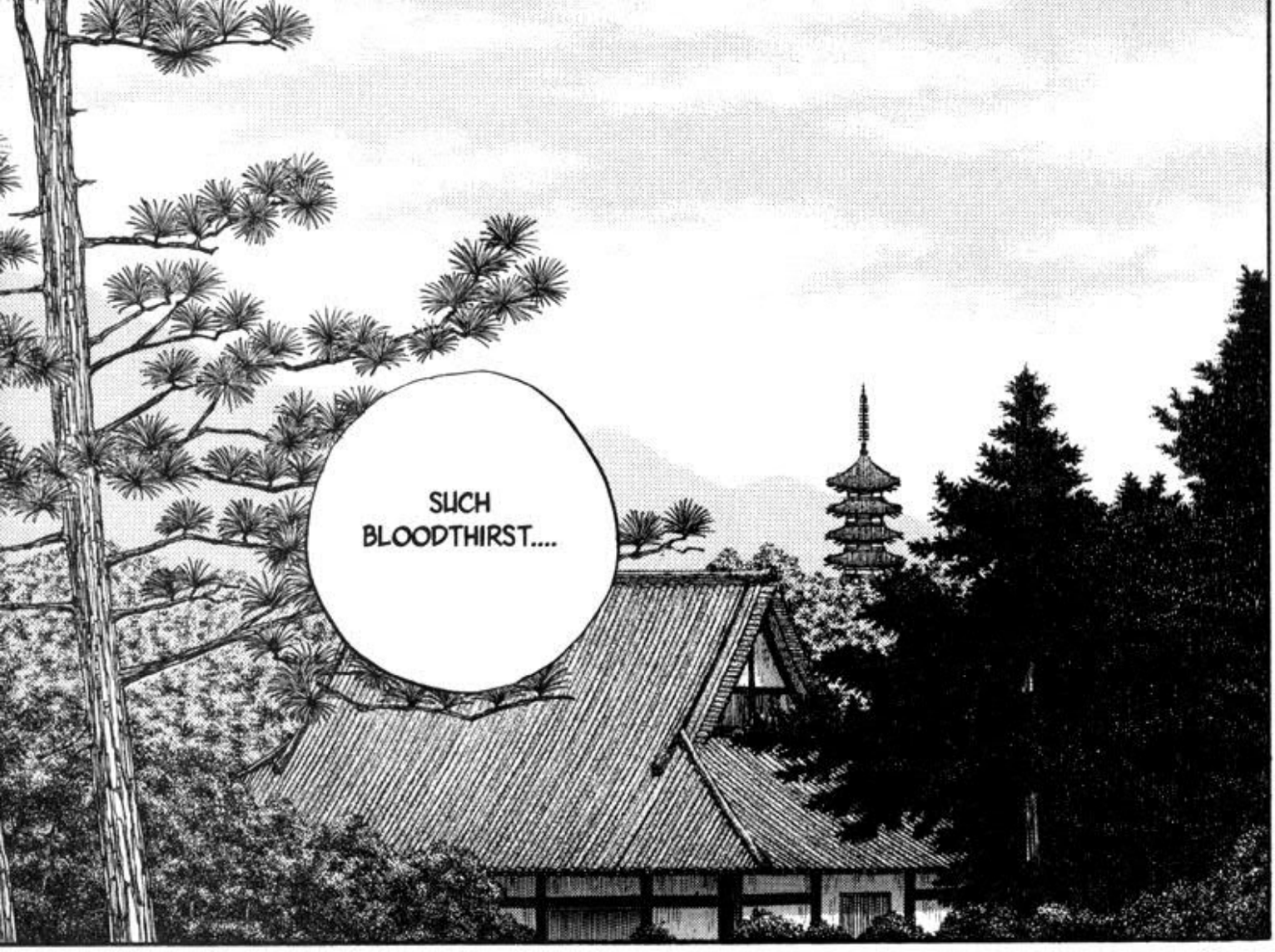
WE'LL SEE IF MIYAMOTO MUSASHI SHOWS UP...
...BEFORE I'M THROUGH WITH THE REST OF YOU.

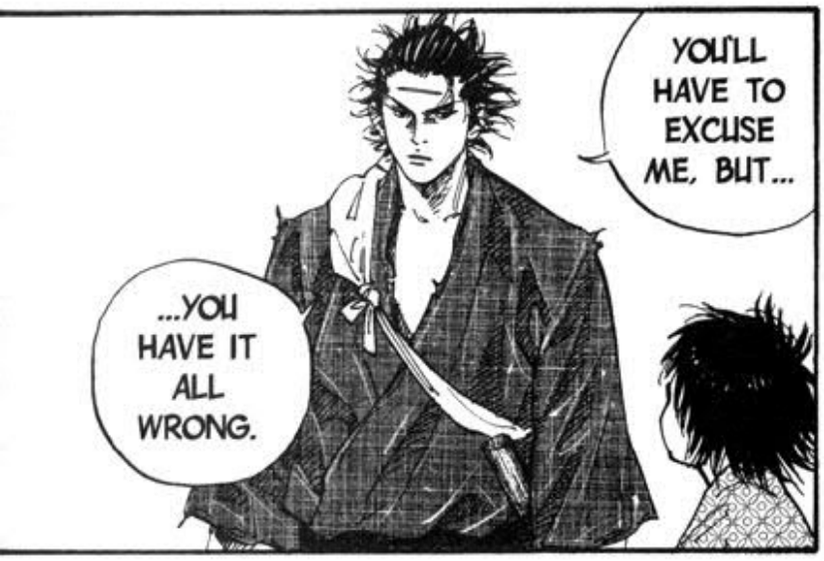
SEE YOU TOMORROW.
YOU BETTER *HOPE* HE SHOWS UP SOON.





...
...
GION TŌJI...
I'M DONE WITH YOU. NOW LEAVE...
HŌZŌIN HAS NO NEED FOR COWARDS.

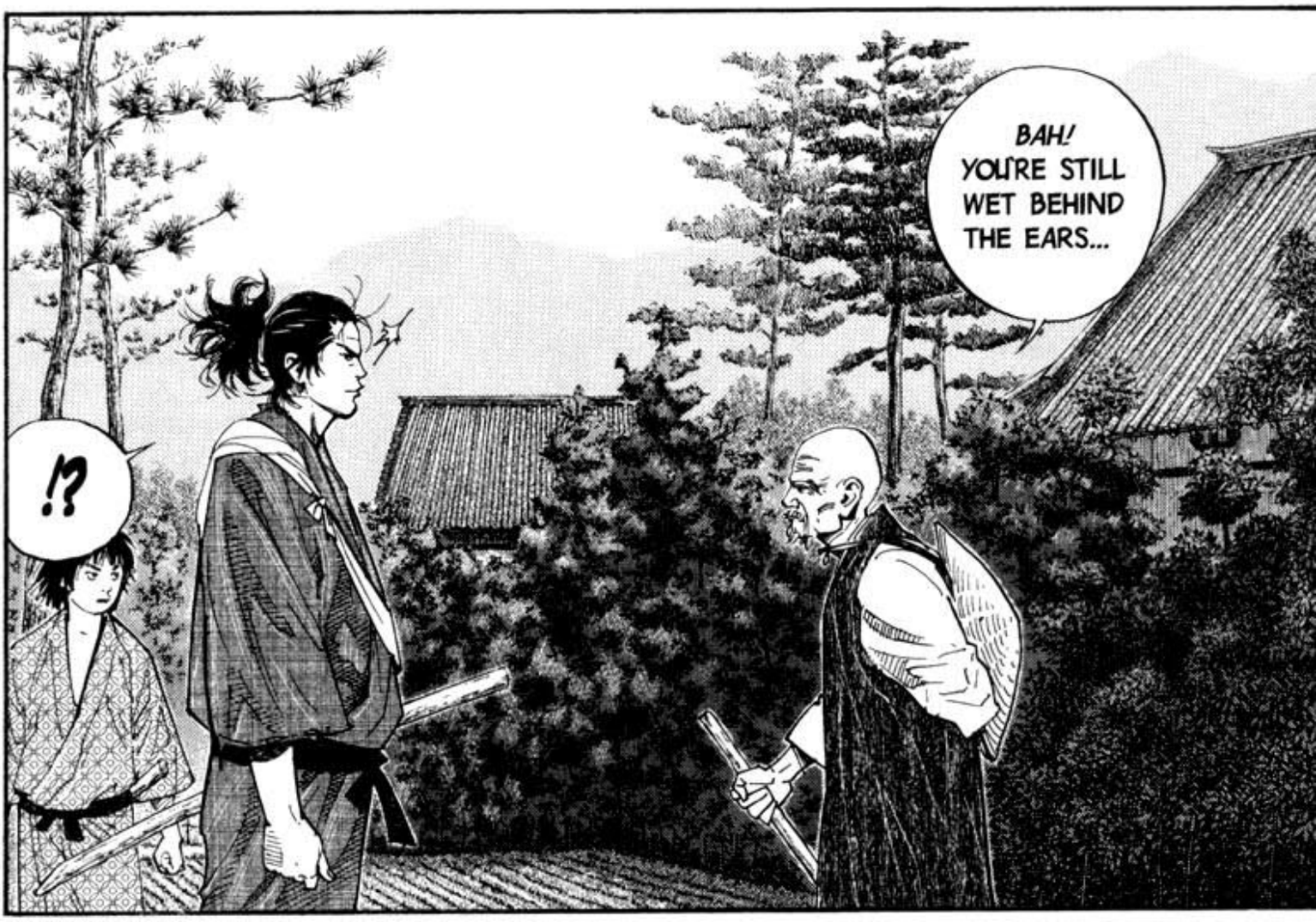

SUCH BLOODTHIRST....


YOU'LL HAVE TO EXCUSE ME, BUT...
...YOU HAVE IT ALL WRONG.

I FELT LIKE YOU WERE GOING TO STRIKE ME WITH THAT HOE.
OR WAS I JUST IMAGINING THINGS?

YOUNG ONE...YOU HOLD SUCH AGGRESSION IN YOU.
I THOUGHT YOU WERE GOING TO KILL ME.
...

HMPH


BAH! YOU'RE STILL WET BEHIND THE EARS...
!?

MUSASHI...
HMPH.
YOU HAVE NO GRACE.

M-MI ...
WHAT'S YOUR NAME?
MIYAMOTO MUSASHI.

IT'S THAT CLUMSY BLOODTHIRST OF YOURS.
BAH!
WHAT DO YOU MEAN!?
HRMPH.
WHAT!?
YOU BETTER NOT INSULT MY MASTER!
GASP!
GLARE

TFT
The Furry Triangles

PTU...
...
HAK!
HUH?
THAT'S HOW YOU ACTED TOWARDS ME.
DO YOU UNDER-STAND?
THAT BLOOD-THIRST OF YOURS...
CLUMSY... GRACE-LESS...
YOU THOUGHT I WAS GOING TO ATTACK YOU WITH MY HOE?
HRMPH...

ME AS WELL AS OTHERS--WE ARE ONLY MIRRORS REFLECTING *YOUR OWN* BLOODTHIRST.
THAT WAS *YOUR* BLOODTHIRST.
...!?
...
HRMPH...
?
?
DO YOU... UNDER-STAND?

HOW MANY PEOPLE HAVE YOU KILLED?
YOU MUST HAVE FACED SO MANY ENEMIES THROUGHOUT YOUR LIFE...
BUT YOU MUST UNDERSTAND...
ENEMIES THEY WERE *NOT*...UNTIL *YOU* FORCED THEM TO BECOME SO...
HRMPH...

YOUR OWN BLOODTHIRST...
...TURNS EVERYONE YOU ENCOUNTER AGAINST YOU.
HOW MANY MORE WILL YOU KILL?

YOU'RE JUST CLUMSY AND GRACELESS.
THAT'S NOT TRUE STRENGTH.
HRMPH...
...!!

WHAT WAS THAT OLD MAN TALKING ABOUT!?
HE SHOULD HAVE JUST GIVEN US DIRECTIONS TO HŌZŌIN!!

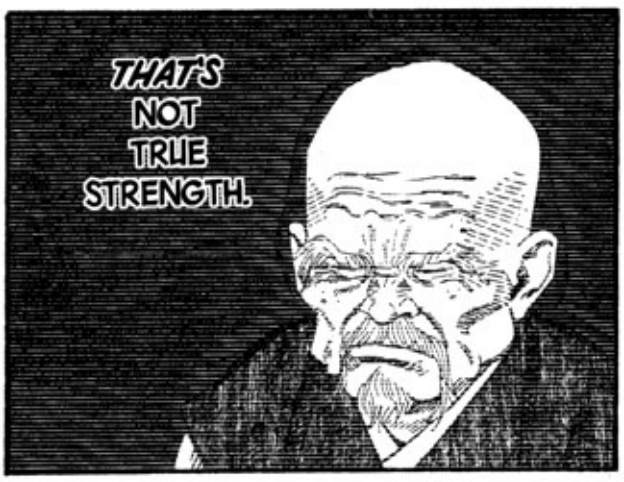
HEY!
THE SIGN SAYS IT'S *THAT* WAY.
WE'RE ALMOST THERE.

ALL THIS NONSENSE ABOUT BLOODTHIRST AND BEING GRACELESS.
KRICH
KRICH
I WAS WAITING FOR YOU TO GET ANGRY AND CUT HIM DOWN.

...

THMP THMP
THE SPEAR TECHNIQUE OF HŌZŌIN!
I'M GETTING EXCITED!

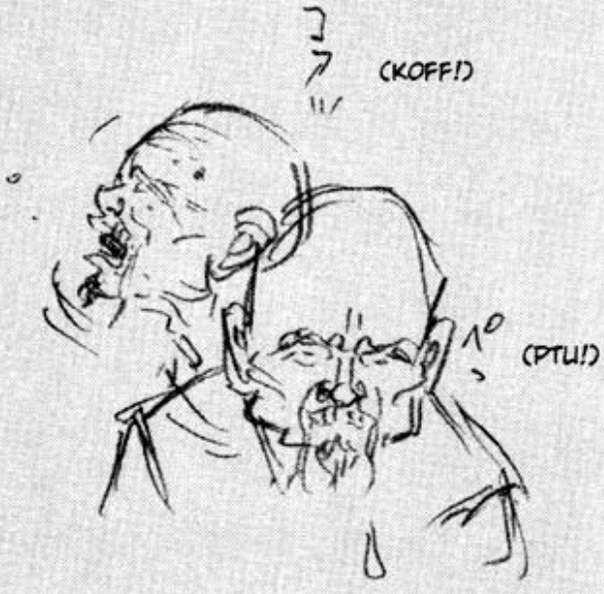
HEY...
KRICH
MASTER!?

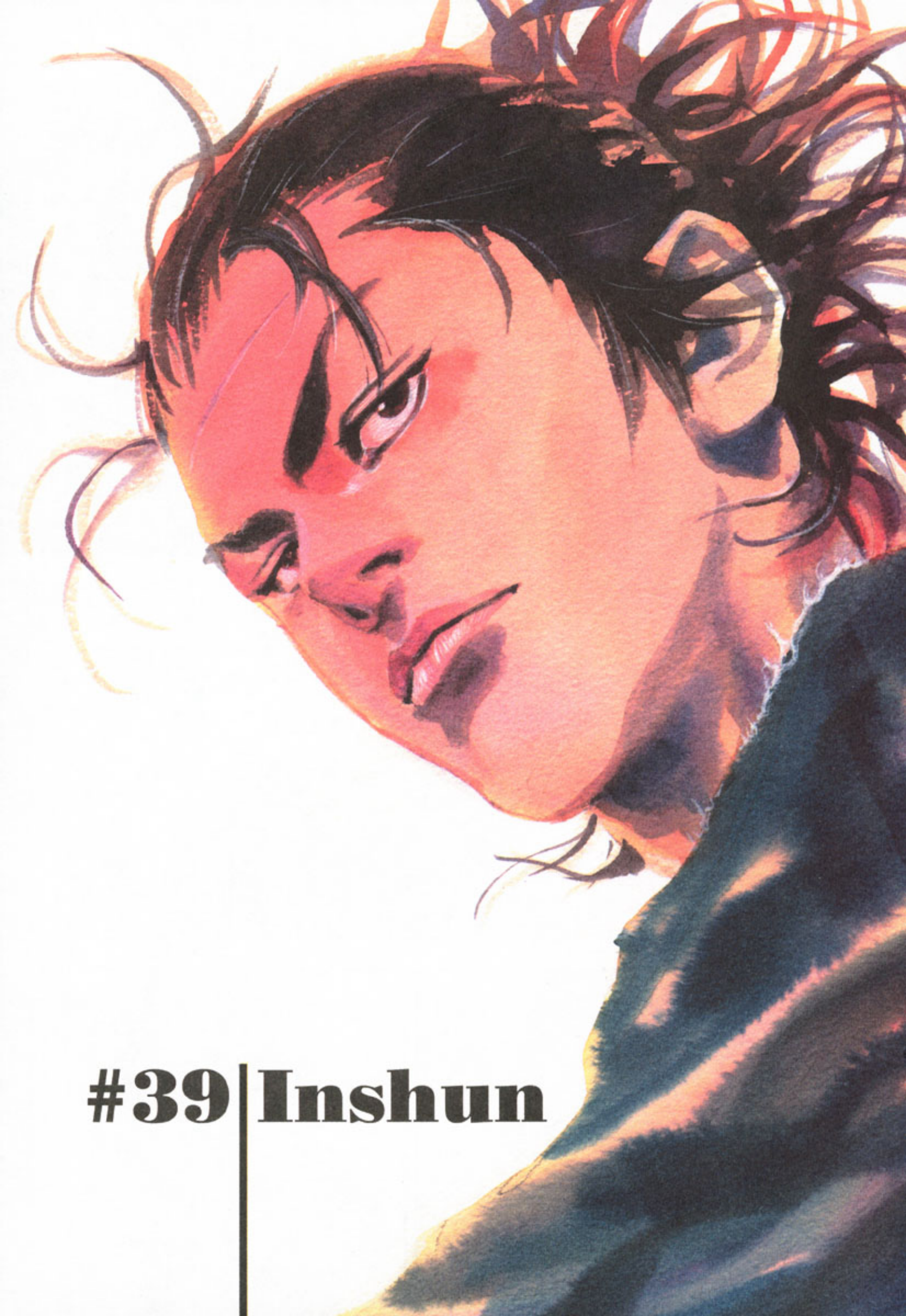

THAT'S NOT TRUE STRENGTH.

CLUMSY AND GRACE-LESS...

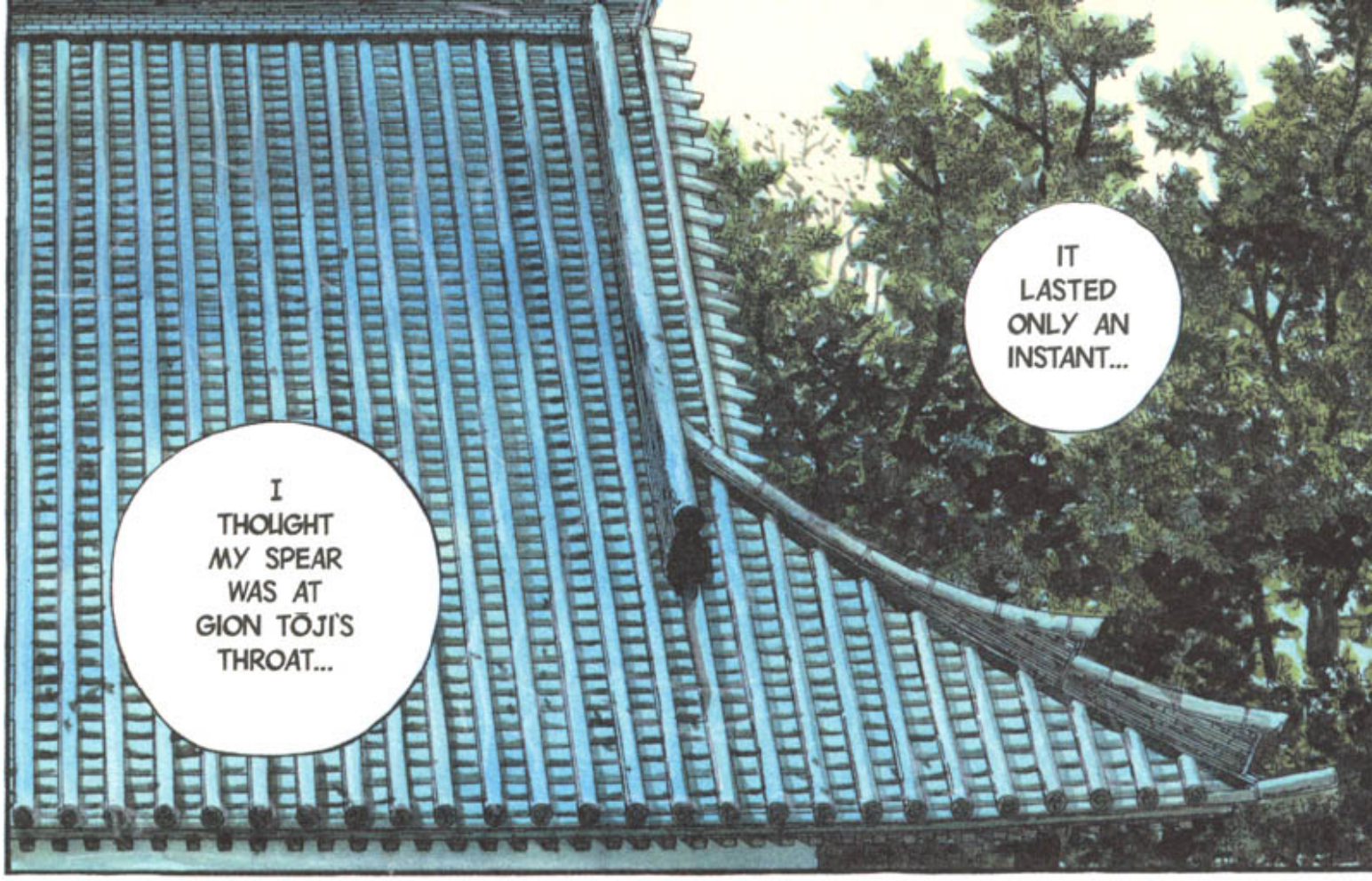
I DON'T UNDER-STAND!!
WHO *WAS* THAT OLD MAN!?
TRUE STRENGTH...
KRICH
KRICH

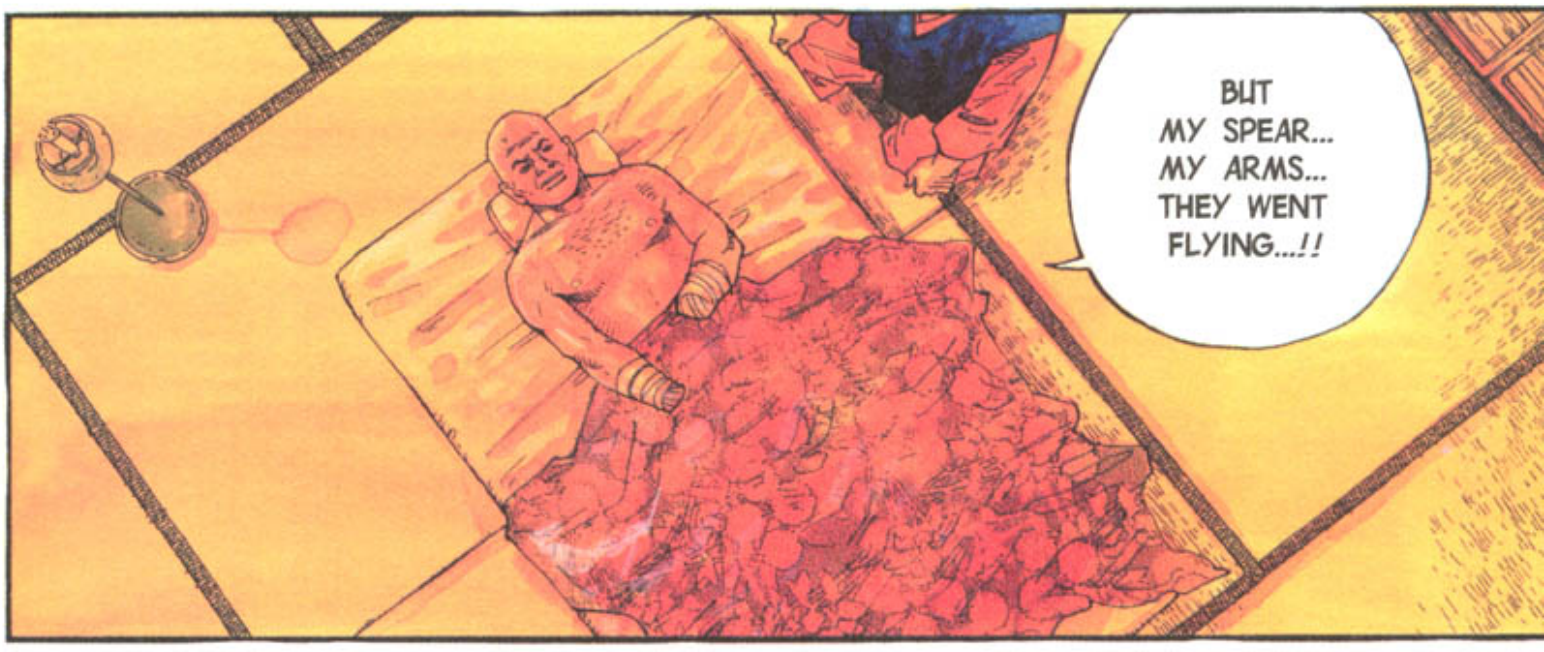
Vagabond


(KOFF!)
(PTU!)



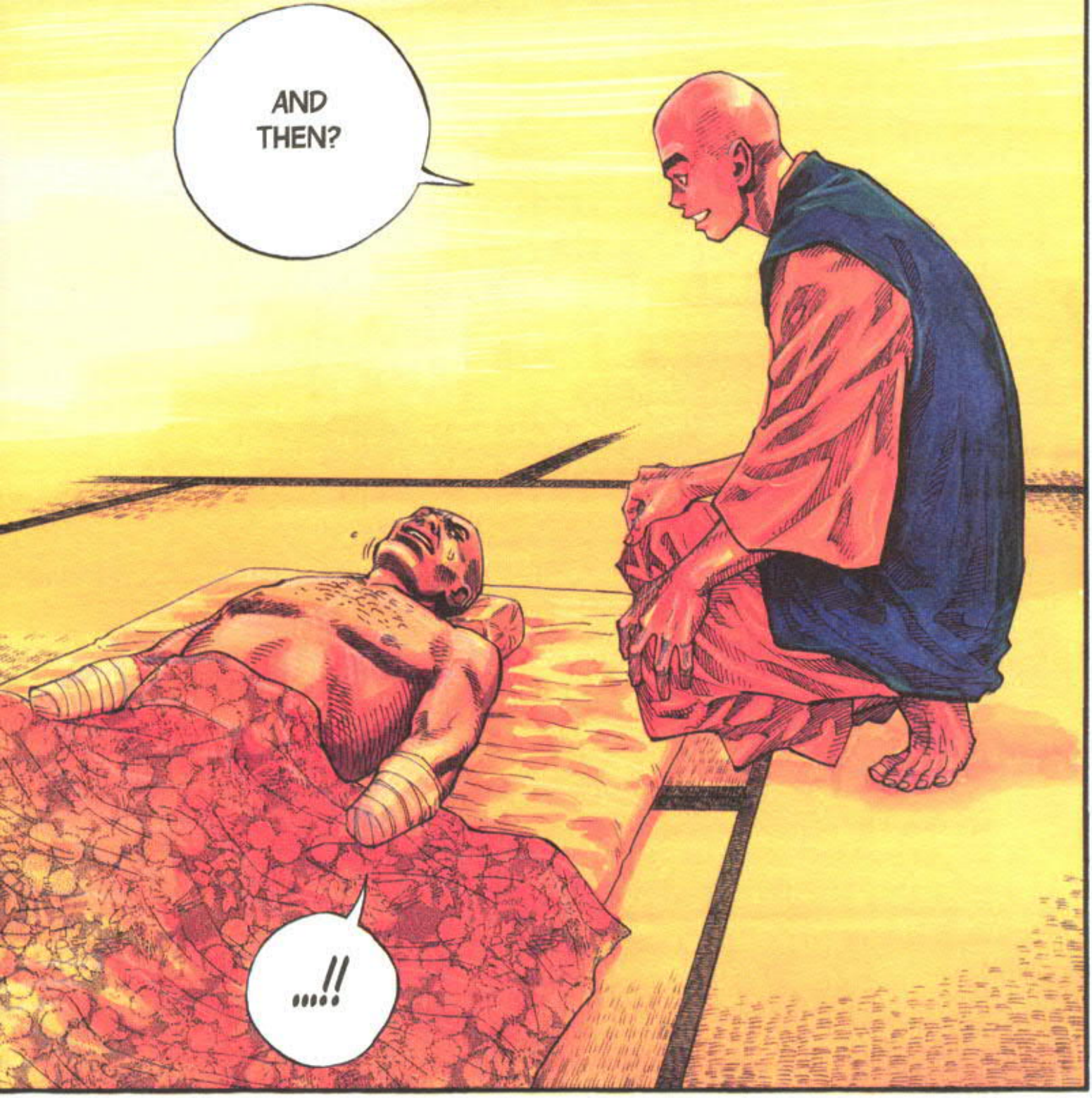
#39 Inshun


IT LASTED ONLY AN INSTANT...
I THOUGHT MY SPEAR WAS AT GION TŌJI'S THROAT...

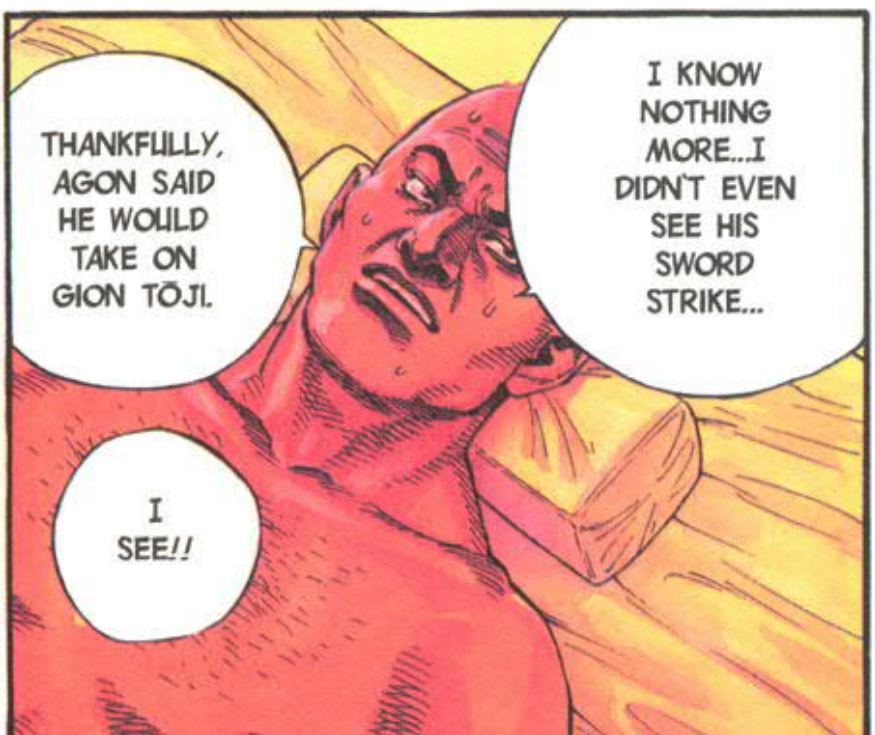

BUT MY SPEAR... MY ARMS... THEY WENT FLYING...!!

UNGH...

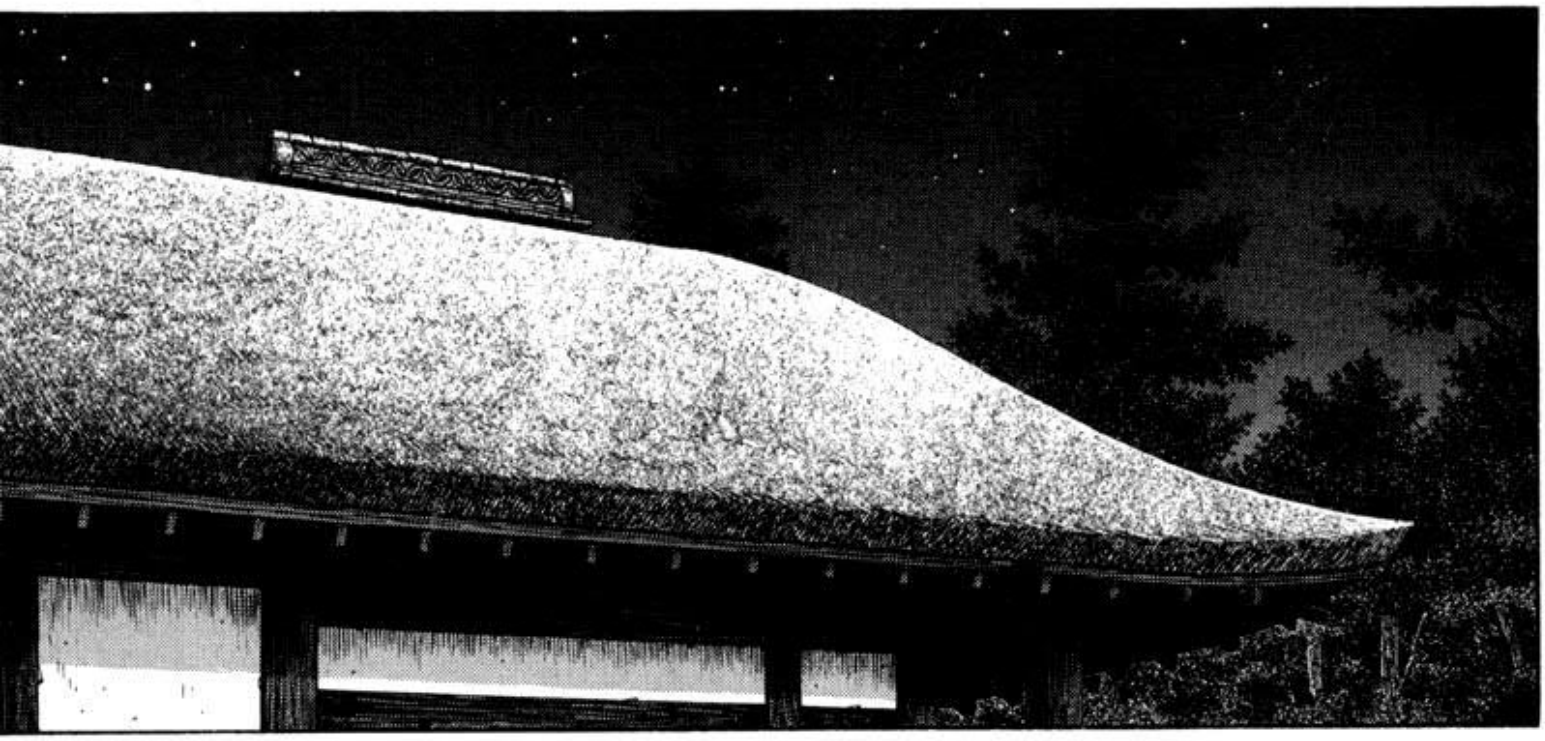
UNGH...

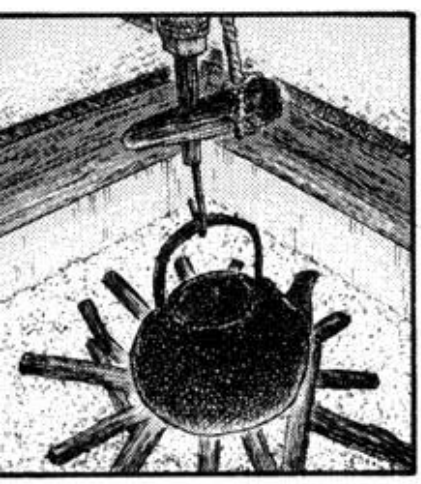

AND THEN?
...!!

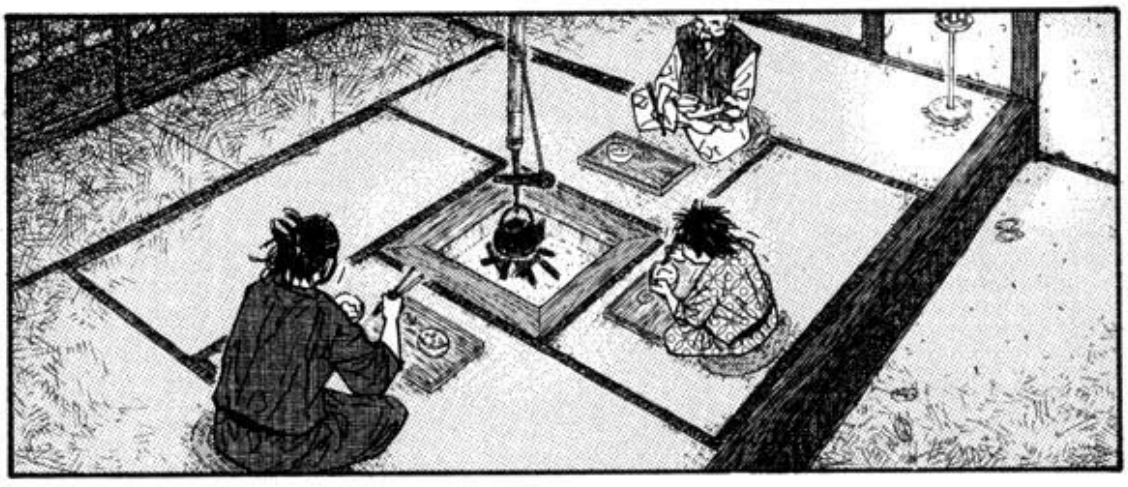
AGON!!

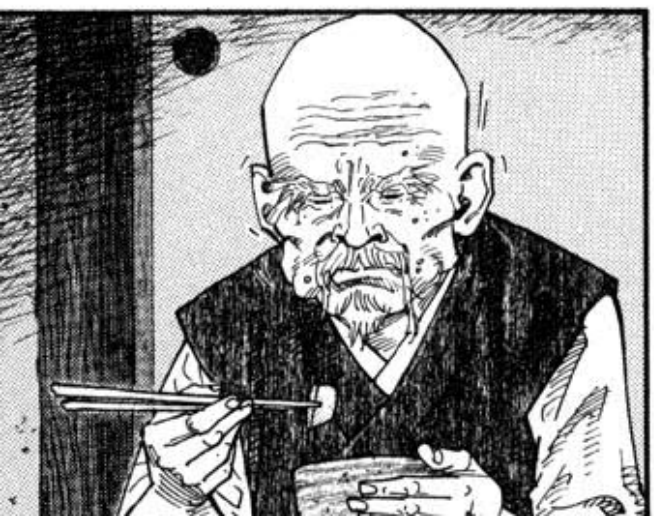

THANKFULLY, AGON SAID HE WOULD TAKE ON GION TŌJI.
I KNOW NOTHING MORE...I DIDN'T EVEN SEE HIS SWORD STRIKE...
I SEE!!

I WANNA FIGHT GION TŌJI!!
LET ME TAKE HIM ON!
FWUD
HM...!?









HUH?
I DON'T UNDERSTAND!

YOU WERE TALKING ABOUT...
...TRUE STRENGTH.

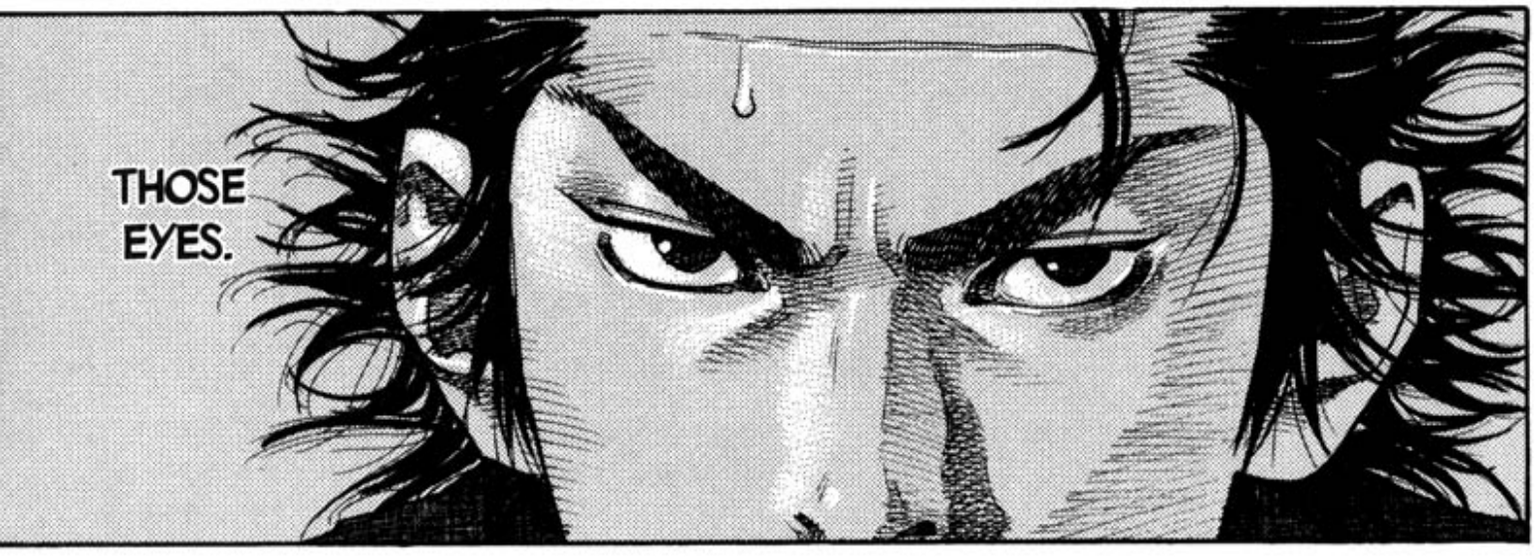
MNCH
MNCH

WHAT DID YOU MEAN!?

GULP

THINK YOU ARE STRONG, DO YOU...?
SO...

WELL...
...


THOSE
EYES.

WHEN HE LOOKS AT ME WITH THOSE EYES.
I FEEL LIKE HE CAN SEE RIGHT THROUGH ME...

WHAT A STRANGE OLD MAN...!!

I'VE GOTTEN THIS FAR FIGHTING WITH MY OWN STYLE.

TO BE HONEST, I DON'T KNOW.

I REALLY DON'T KNOW HOW STRONG I AM.
I FEEL LIKE I *AM* REALLY STRONG...
...BUT AT THE SAME TIME, I FEEL LIKE THERE ARE PLENTY OF OTHERS STRONGER THAN ME.

HMM...

YOU CAN ONLY PERCEIVE WHAT TRUE STRENGTH IS...
...WHEN YOU YOURSELF BECOME TRULY STRONG.

HUH?

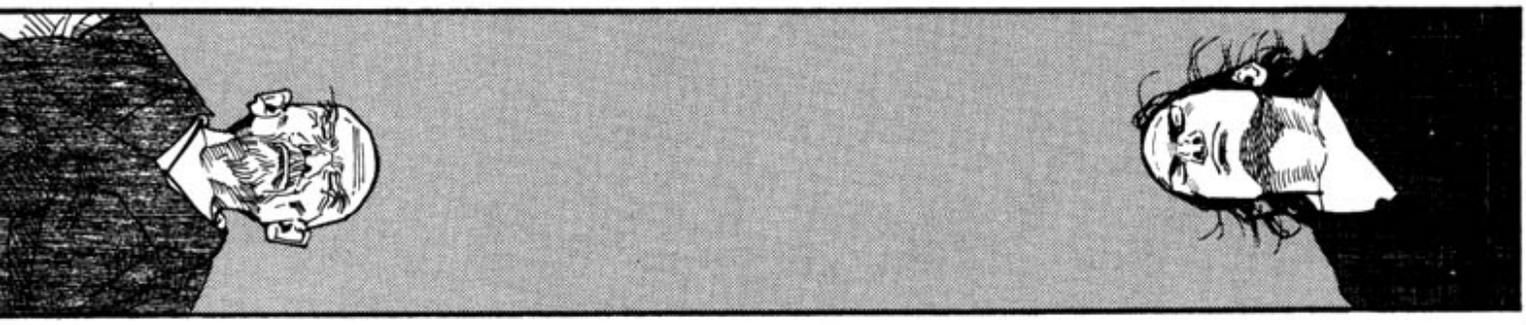
AS LONG AS YOU LIVE IN THAT NARROW WORLD OF YOURS YOU'LL NEVER KNOW WHAT THAT MEANS.
URK
!!

HUH?

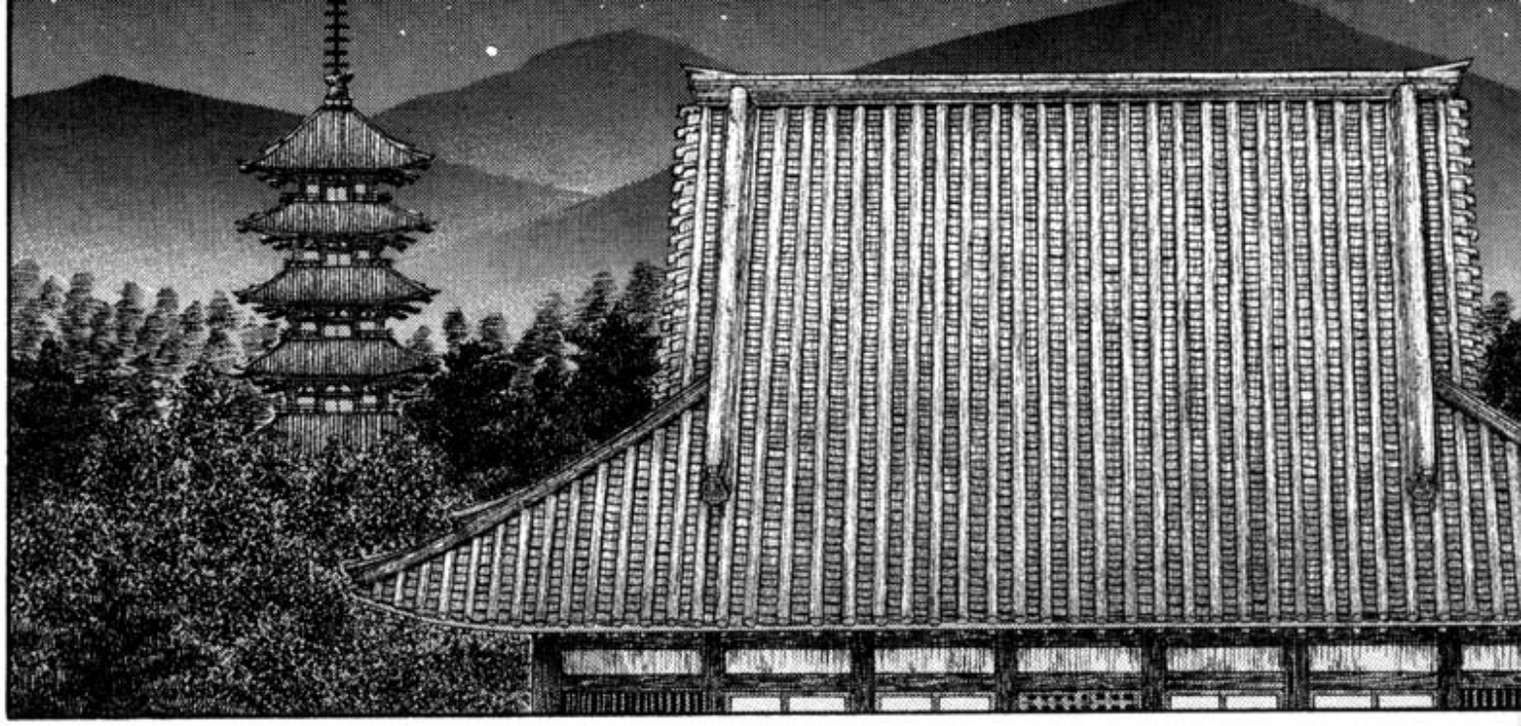
HAH!!
IF I'M NOT STRONG, THEN SO BE IT!!
MNCH
MNCH
IF YOU ARE SWIMMING IN THE OCEAN...
YOU'LL NEVER REALIZE HOW TRULY VAST IT IS...
I'LL JUST MAKE MY WAY UP, STEP BY STEP...
I'LL DEFEAT STRONG OPPONENTS ONE AFTER THE OTHER!!

I'LL MOVE UP THREE STEPS AT A TIME!
I NEED TO FIGHT STRONG OPPONENTS!!
FSH
...

JOIN ME IN A DRINK?
WHUD



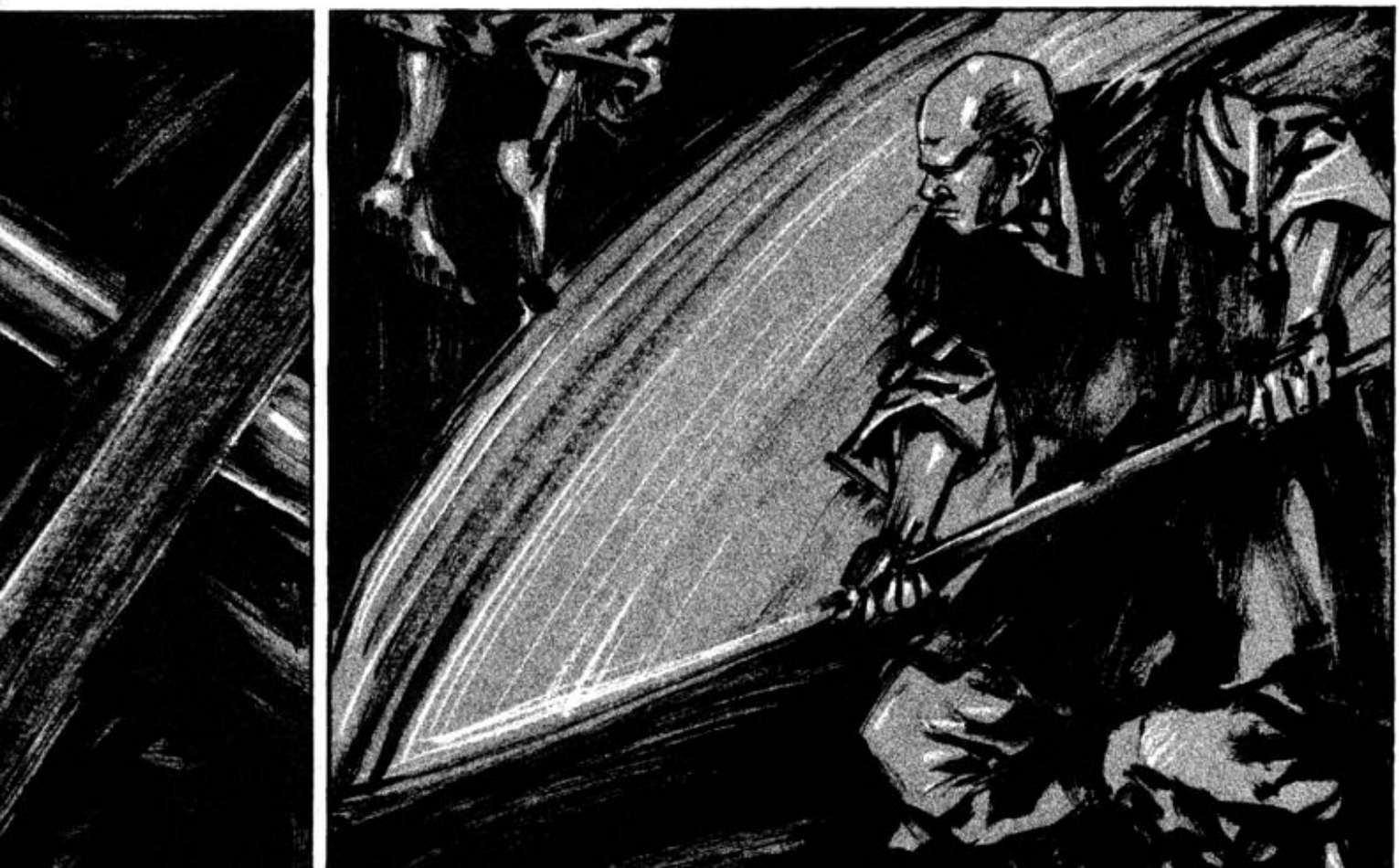
A MONK DRINKING SAKÉ!?
HEY!
WHAT'S WRONG WITH THAT!?
HMPH!



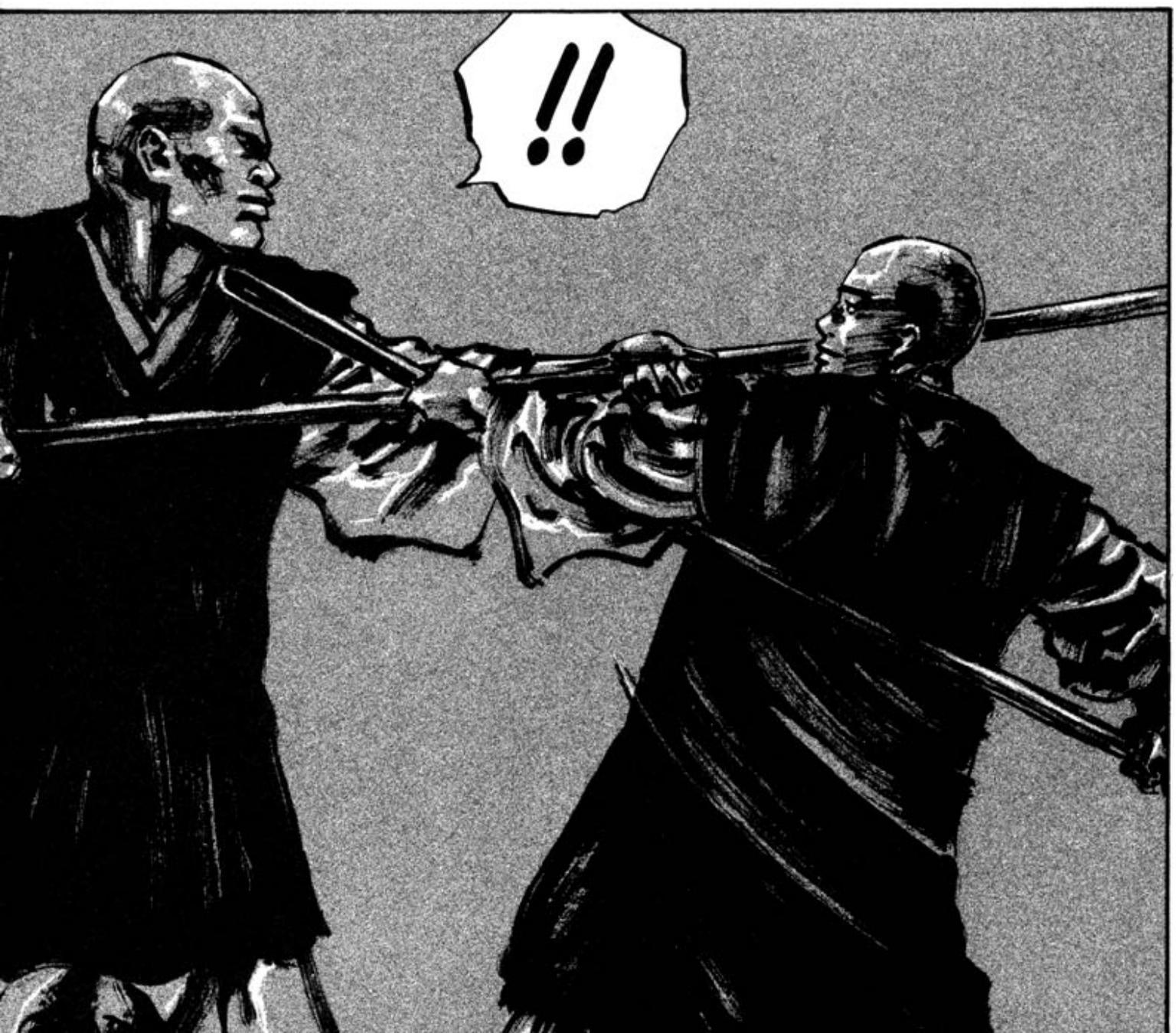
GION
TŌJI...

...IS
QUITE
FOR-
MIDABLE.

HE SAYS... HE WILL COME BACK HERE EVERY DAY UNTIL A MAN NAMED MIYAMOTO MUSASHI APPEARS.
HE APPEARS TO BE FROM KYOTO.
HE HAS A REFINED AIR ABOUT HIM.



INSHUN, YOU MUST HAVE HEARD THE RUMORS ABOUT THAT MAN WHO SINGLE-HANDEDLY CHALLENGED THE YOSHIOKA SCHOOL...
HE PROVED TO BE AN EQUAL MATCH AGAINST THE SECOND SON, YOSHIOKA DENSHICHIRŌ.
THEY SAY...
...THAT MAN'S NAME WAS...
MIYAMOTO MUSASHI!
YAHHH!

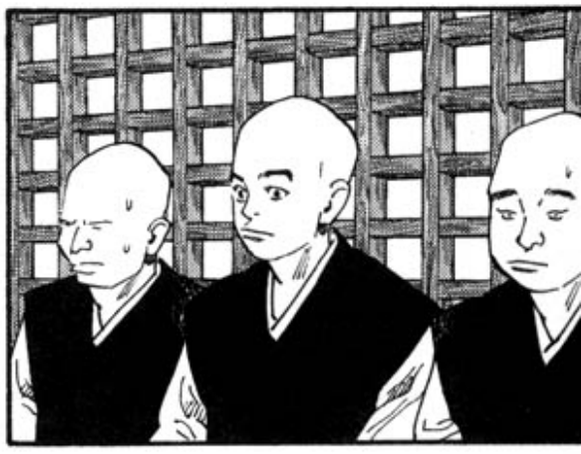


WHEN I WAS A KID...
YOSHIOKA KEMPŌ PAID US A VISIT FROM KYOTO...
HIS OLDEST SON, SEIJŪRŌ WAS WITH HIM.

SO THEN, GION TŌJI...
...IS AN ASSASSIN FOR THE YOSHIOKA!?

YOSHIOKA SEIJŪRŌ!

IT WAS THEN THAT I REAL-IZED...



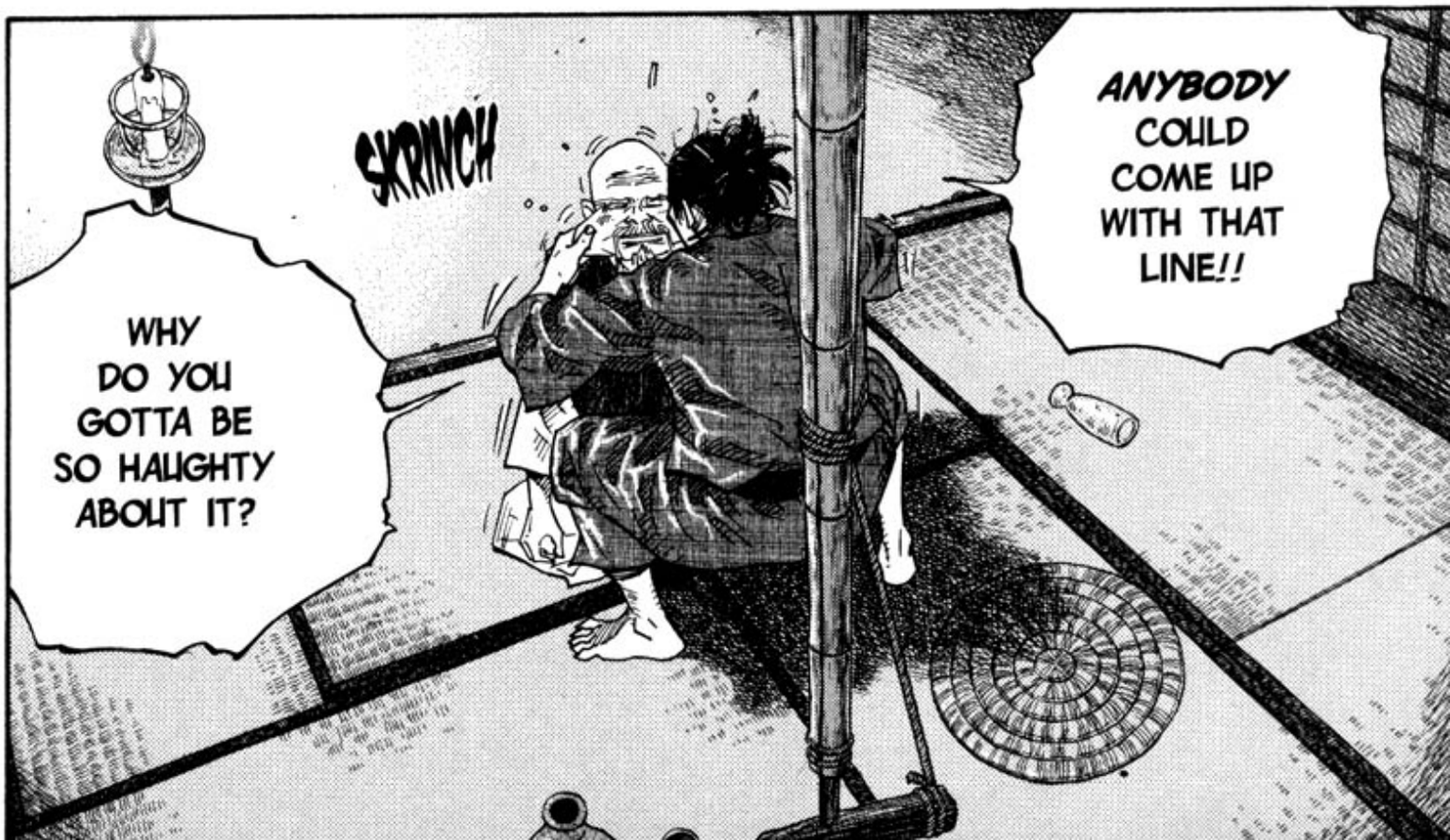
...THAT I WASN'T THE ONLY PRODIGY AROUND!

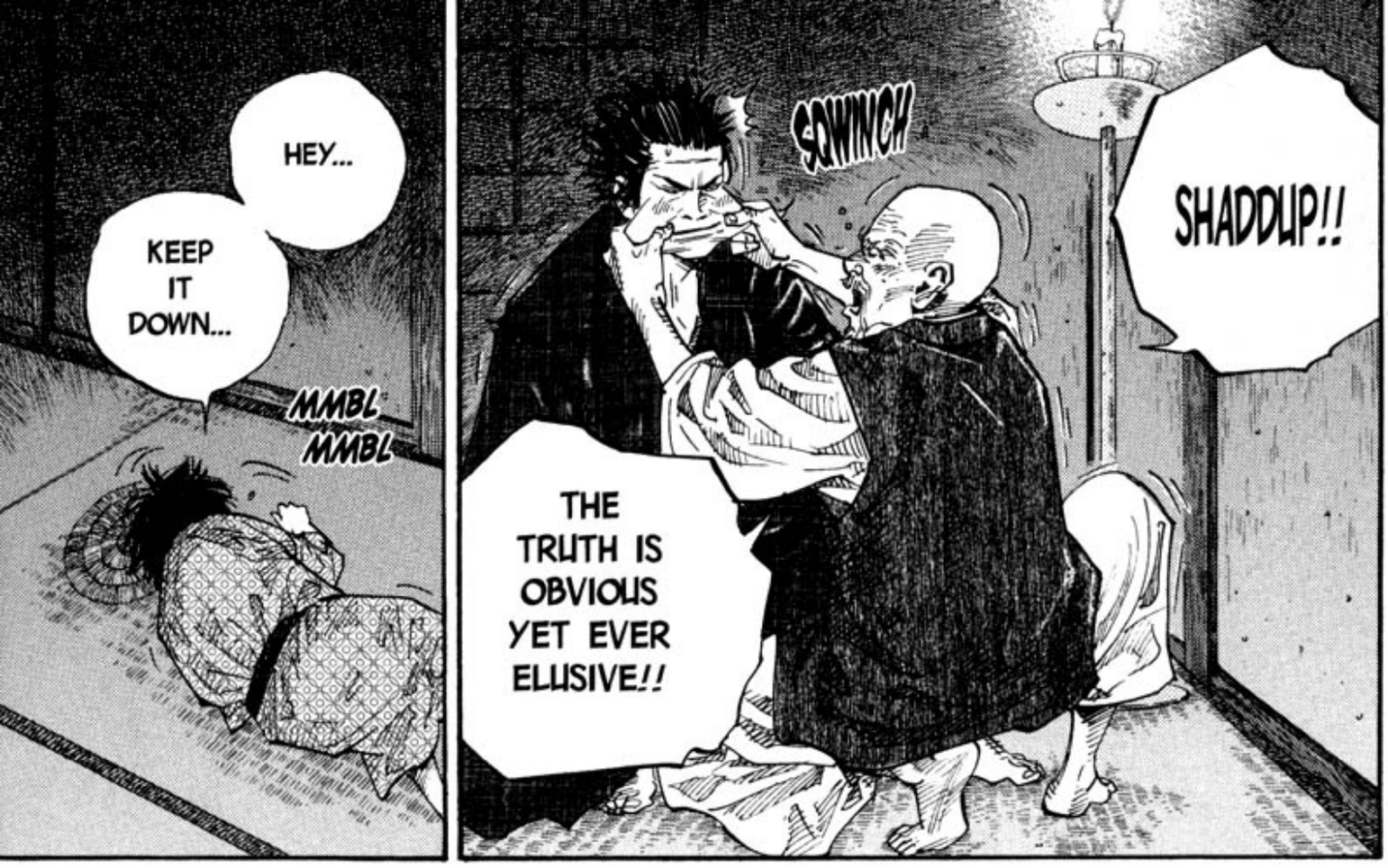
THE MAN THAT HAD YOSHIOKA DENSHICHIRŌ IN A DEADLOCK...!!
AND AN ASSASSIN FROM THE YOSHIOKA SCHOOL!!
I CAN'T WAIT TO FIGHT THEM!!

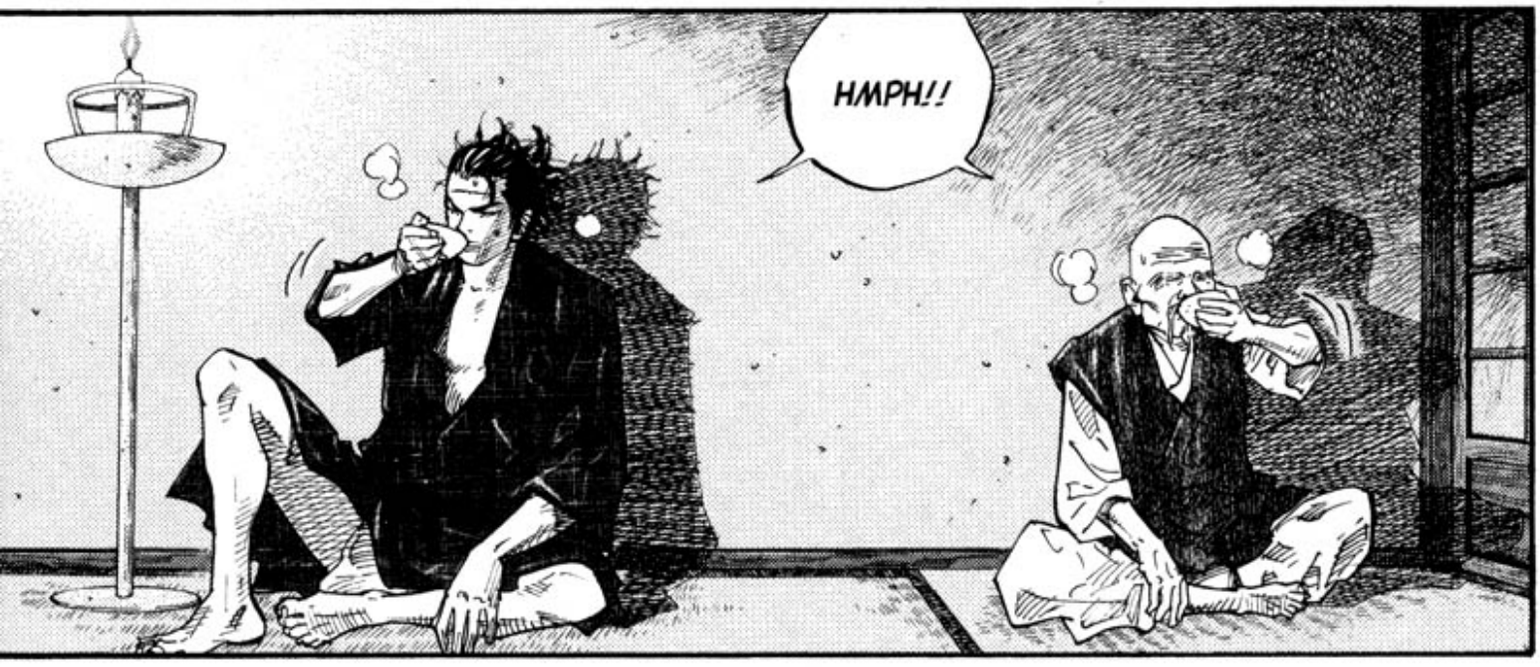
AH, C'MON...

ZZZ
SHNORR

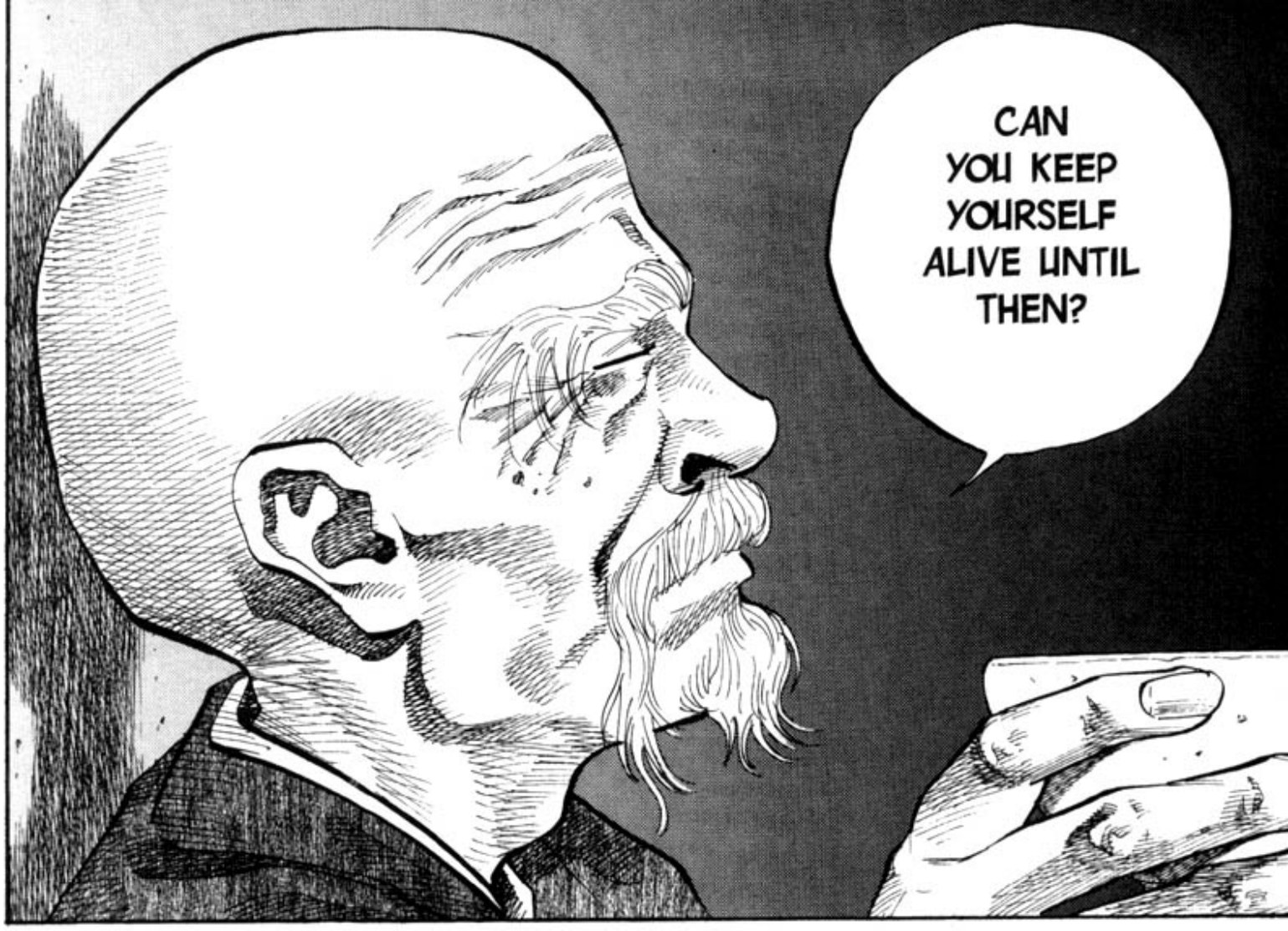
"YOU CAN ONLY PERCEIVE WHAT TRUE STRENGTH IS...
"...WHEN YOU YOURSELF BECOME TRULY STRONG."
HRMPH!

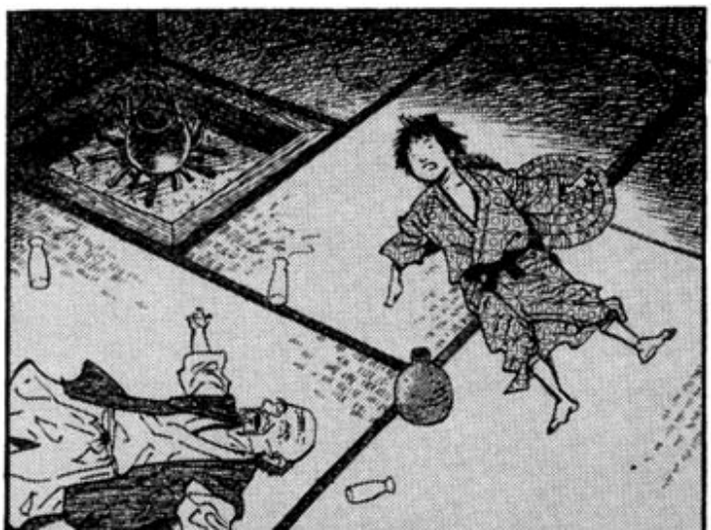

SKRINCH
WHY DO YOU GOTTA BE SO HAUGHTY ABOUT IT?
ANYBODY COULD COME UP WITH THAT LINE!!


HEY...
KEEP IT DOWN...
MMBL MMBL
SQWINCH
SHADDUP!!
THE TRUTH IS OBVIOUS YET EVER ELUSIVE!!


HMPH!!

...
AND...
...LET'S SAY THERE *WILL* COME A TIME WHEN YOU FINALLY UNDER-STAND TRUE STRENGTH...

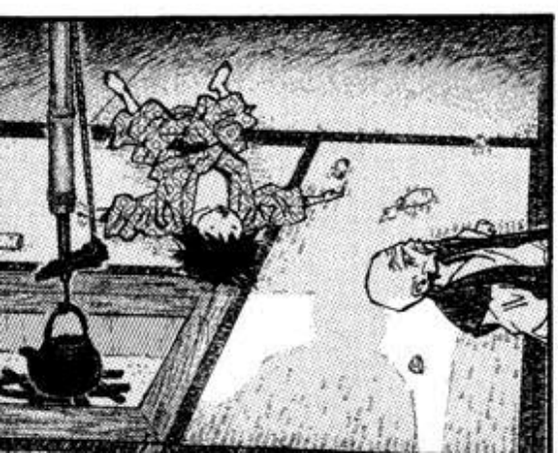

CAN YOU KEEP YOURSELF ALIVE UNTIL THEN?



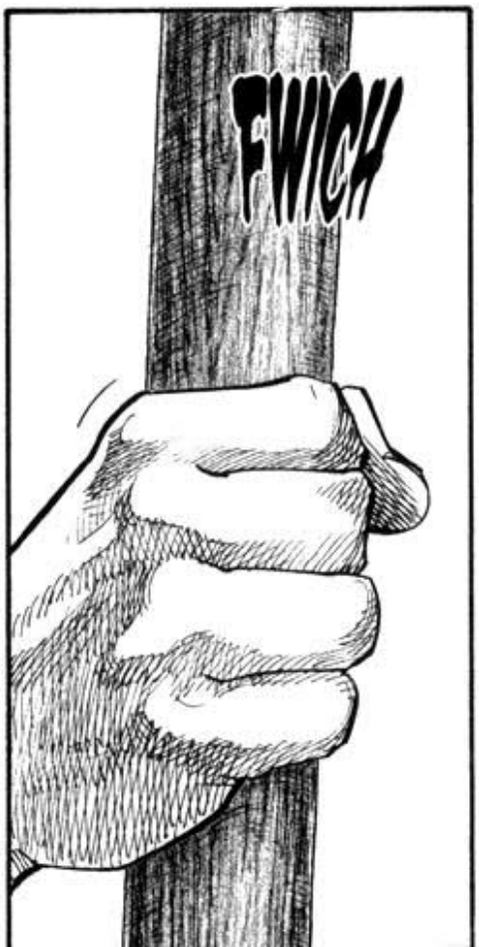
HUH!

...

FSH



FIP


FWICH

I'M STRONG!!
I WON'T DIE!!

...
RIGHT!!

...

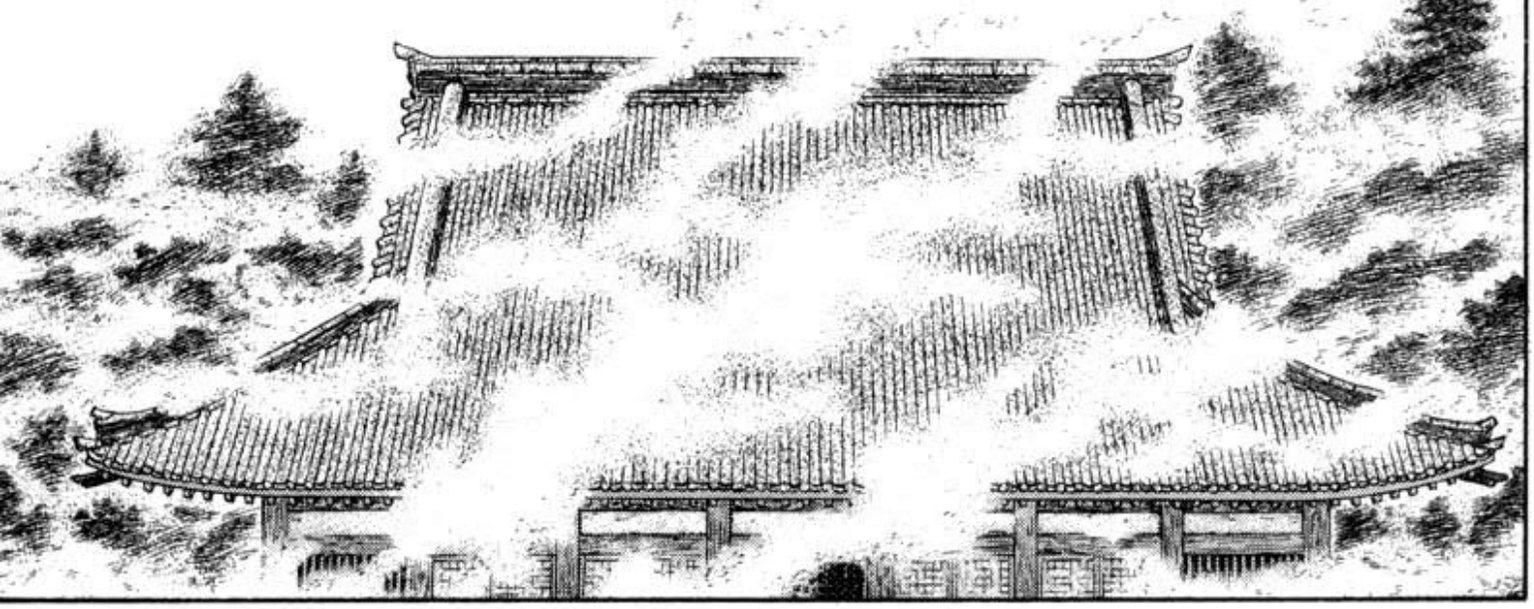
URGH!
WHOP

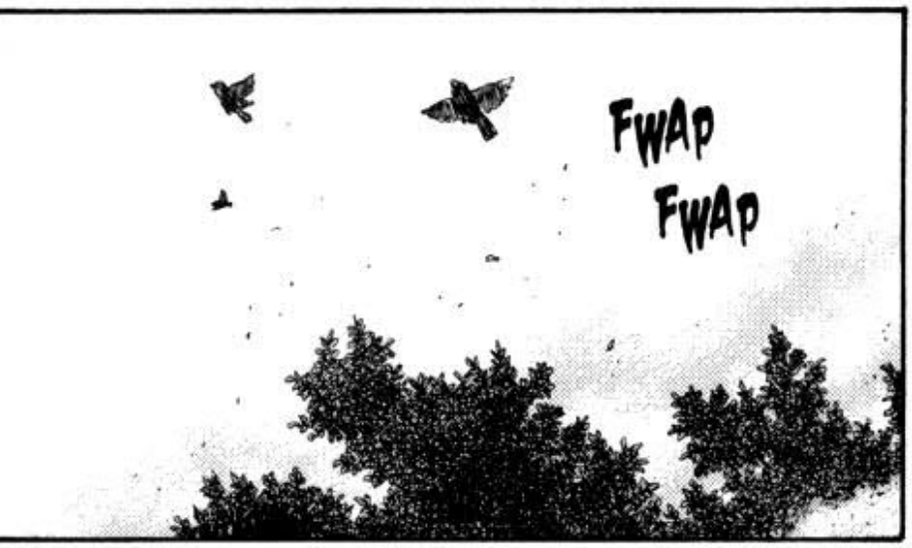
HA HA

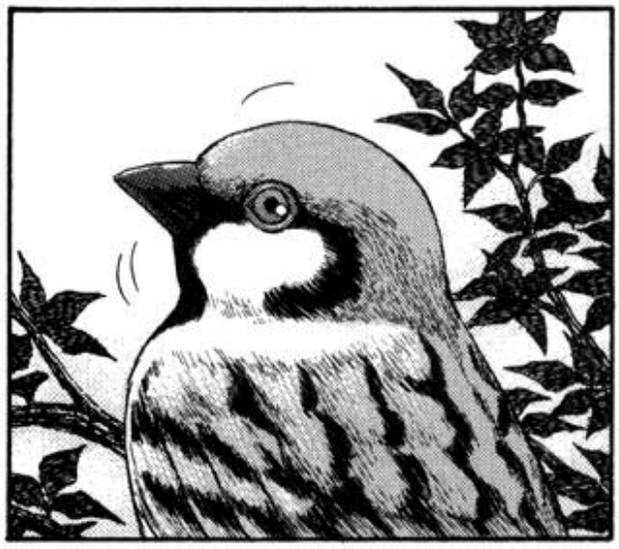
THE SPEAR HAS GREAT REACH.

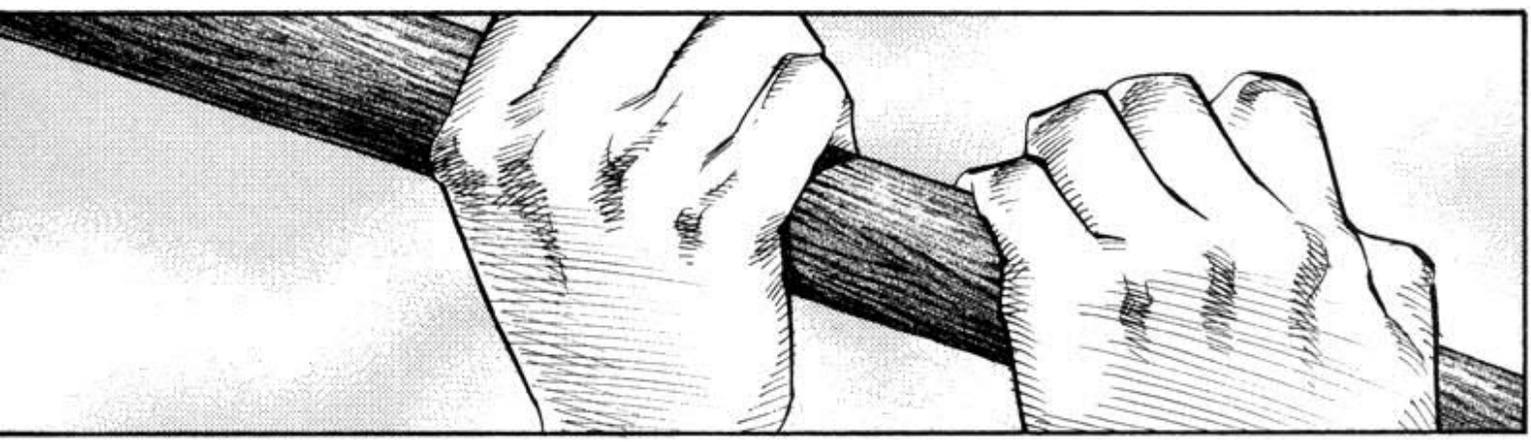
Vagabond

(HRMPH?)



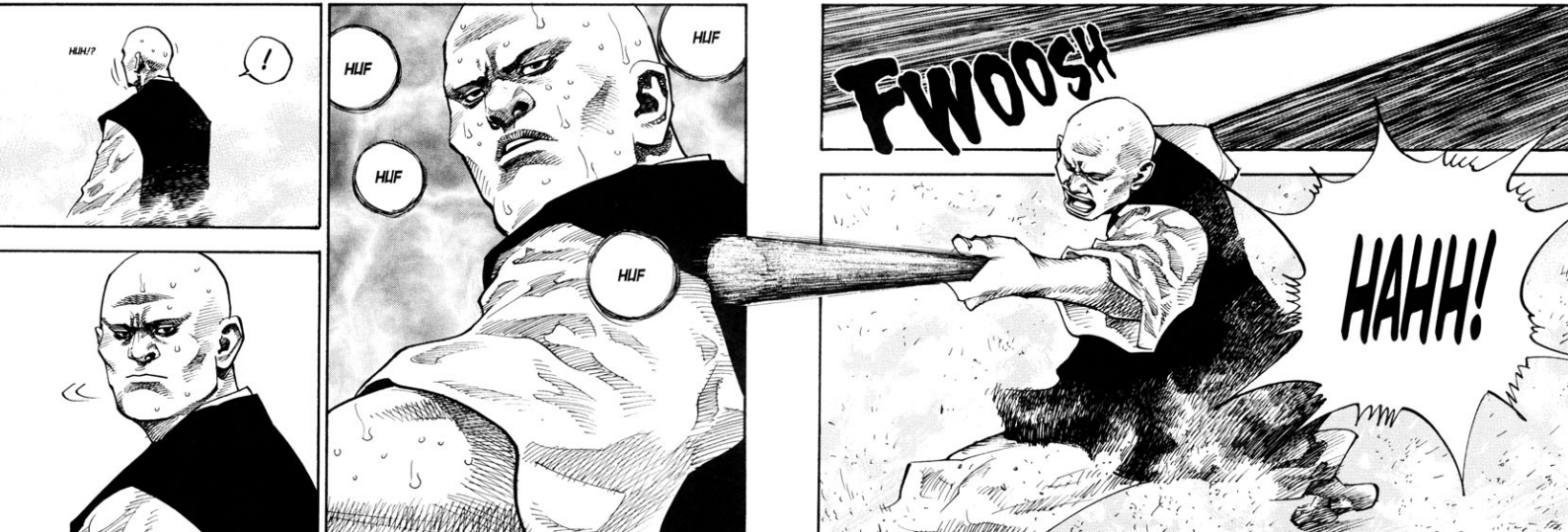

FWAP
FWAP





VWOOM
VWOOM
VWOOM

#40 | Agon

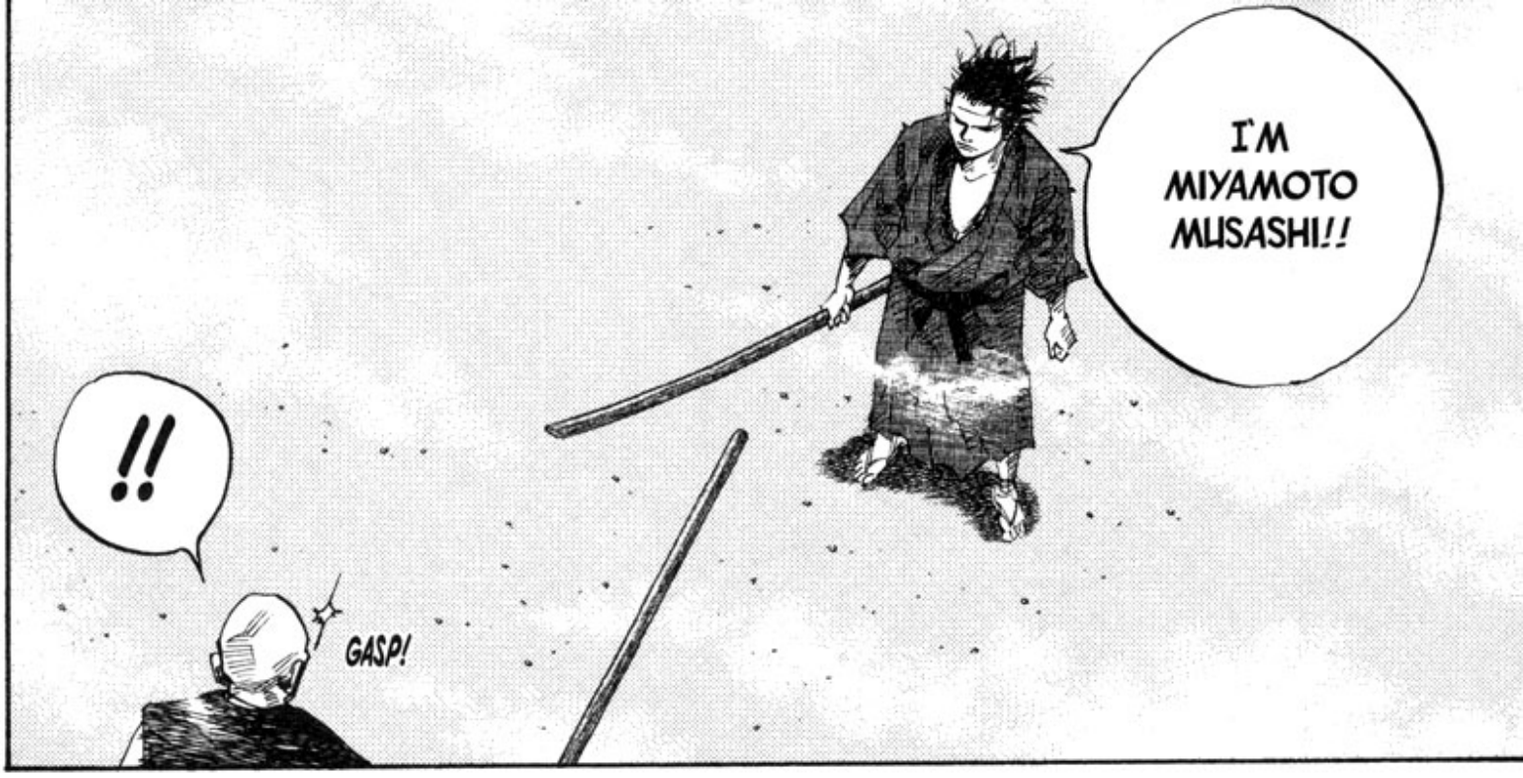


THE ENEMY...!!
HMPH. THE SPEAR TECHNIQUE OF HOZOIN... IMPRESSIVE!
KRICH
FSH
KRICH
KRICH
GION TOJI...?
NO...
KRICH
KRICH
THIS BLOODTHIRST I SENSE...
IT'S MORE RECKLESS AND PRIMITIVE...
KRICH
KRICH
KRICH

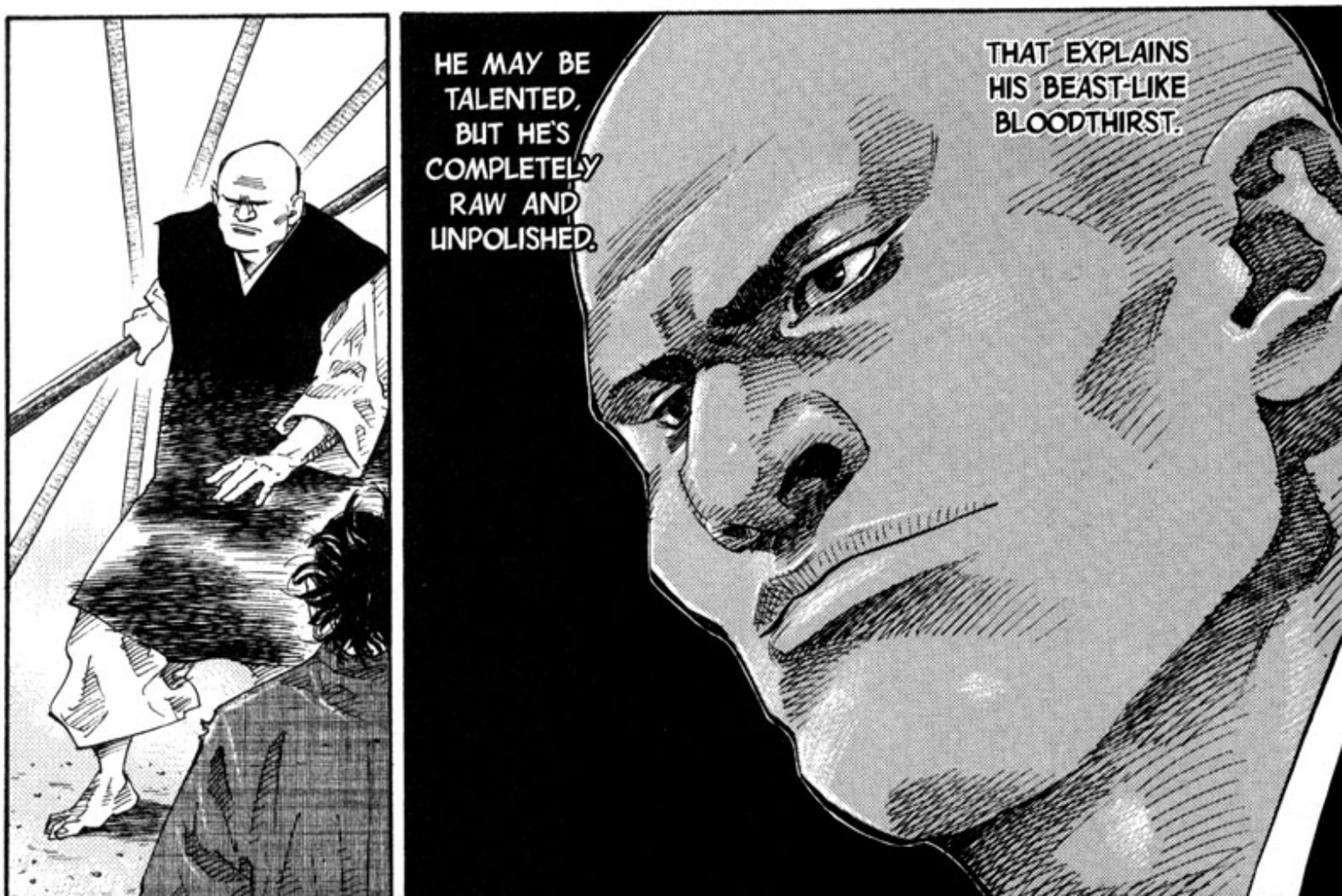
THOK
HE'S ALREADY ATTACKING ME!

VWOOSH
YAHH!

!!
THWAK
TWITCH
IN-
CREDIBLE
...
TWITCH
TWITCH
...BY
AGON OF
HŌZŌIN.
YOU WILL
HAVE THE
PRIVILEGE
OF BEING
DEFEATED...
AND
HE'S
NOT
IN'EI!?
HE'S SO
STRONG...
HE'S
NOT
IN'EI...?

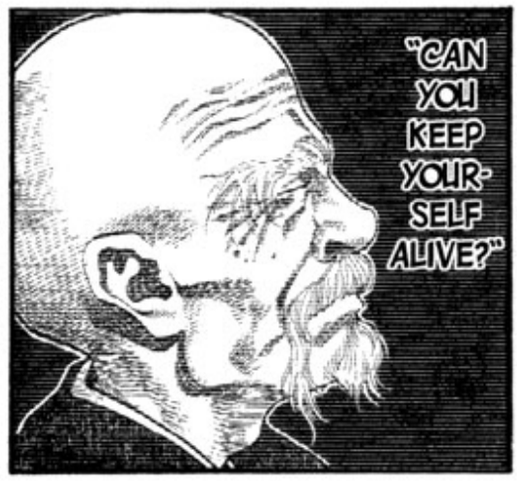

I'M MIYAMOTO MUSASHI!!
!!
GASP!

HE'S SO YOUNG...!
...
I SEE...


HE MAY BE TALENTED, BUT HE'S COMPLETELY RAW AND UNPOLISHED.
THAT EXPLAINS HIS BEAST-LIKE BLOODTHIRST.

ALLOW ME TO DEMONSTRATE ...
...THE SPEAR TECHNIQUE OF HŌZŌIN TEMPLE.

HMPH!


"CAN YOU KEEP YOUR-SELF ALIVE?"

"CAN YOU KEEP YOURSELF ALIVE UNTIL THEN?"

LET'S SEE WHAT YOU GOT...
ALL RIGHT, THEN...

YAHH!
THWOK

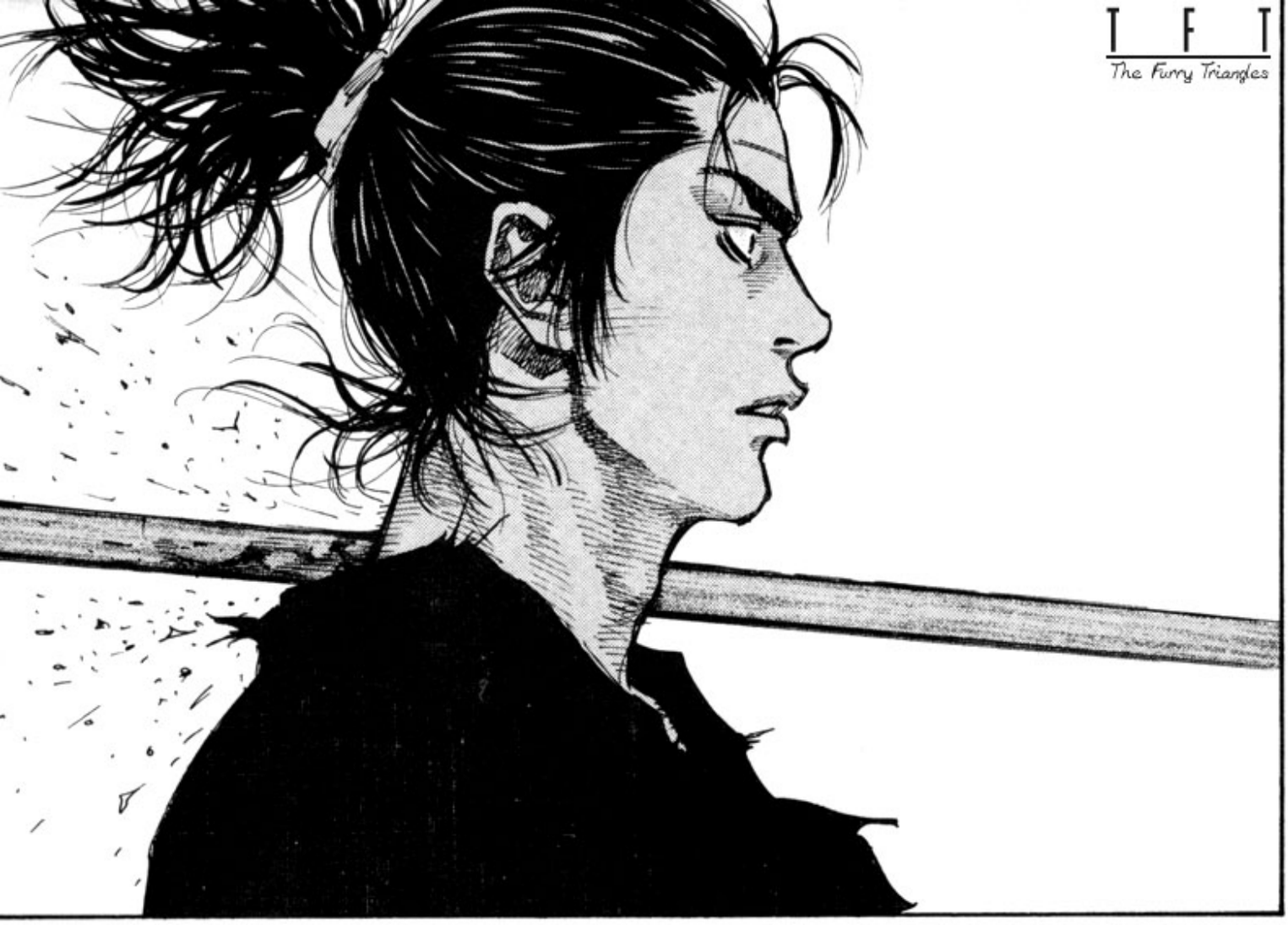
FWOOM
...!!
WHUD
NNGH!

!!
FWSH
HAHH!
ARGH!
WHUD
!!

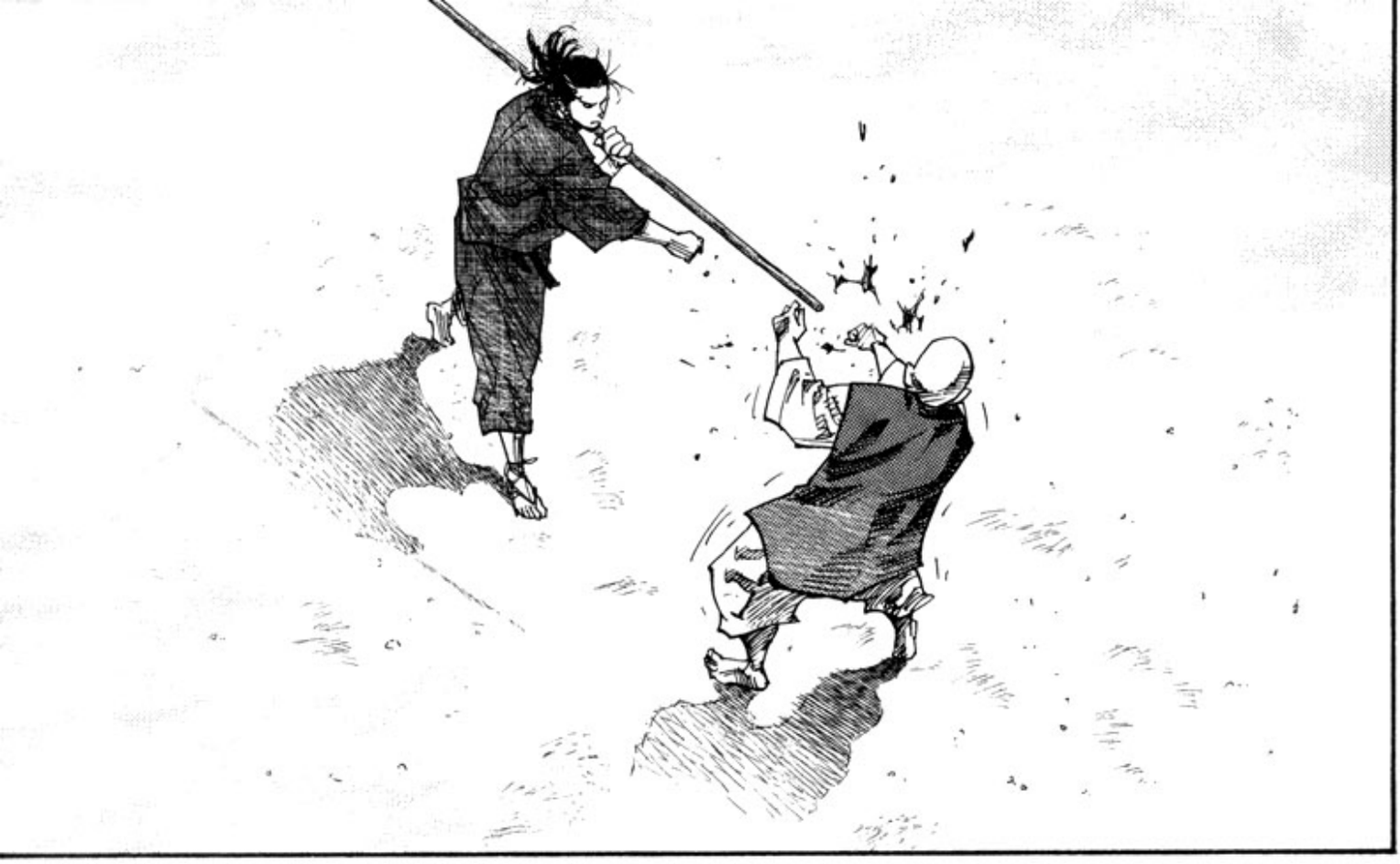
WOOSH
!!
IT'S LIKE HE'S LUNGING A LOG AT ME!
SUCH OVER-WHELMING FORCE!
HUF
HUF
I'VE GOT TO WIN.
I'LL WIN.
HUF
HUF
HAVE TO GET INSIDE...
"RIGHT!!"
"THE SPEAR HAS GREAT REACH."
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF

...THEN I'LL WIN!!
!!
THRAK
HMPH.

YAHHH!!
WOOSH



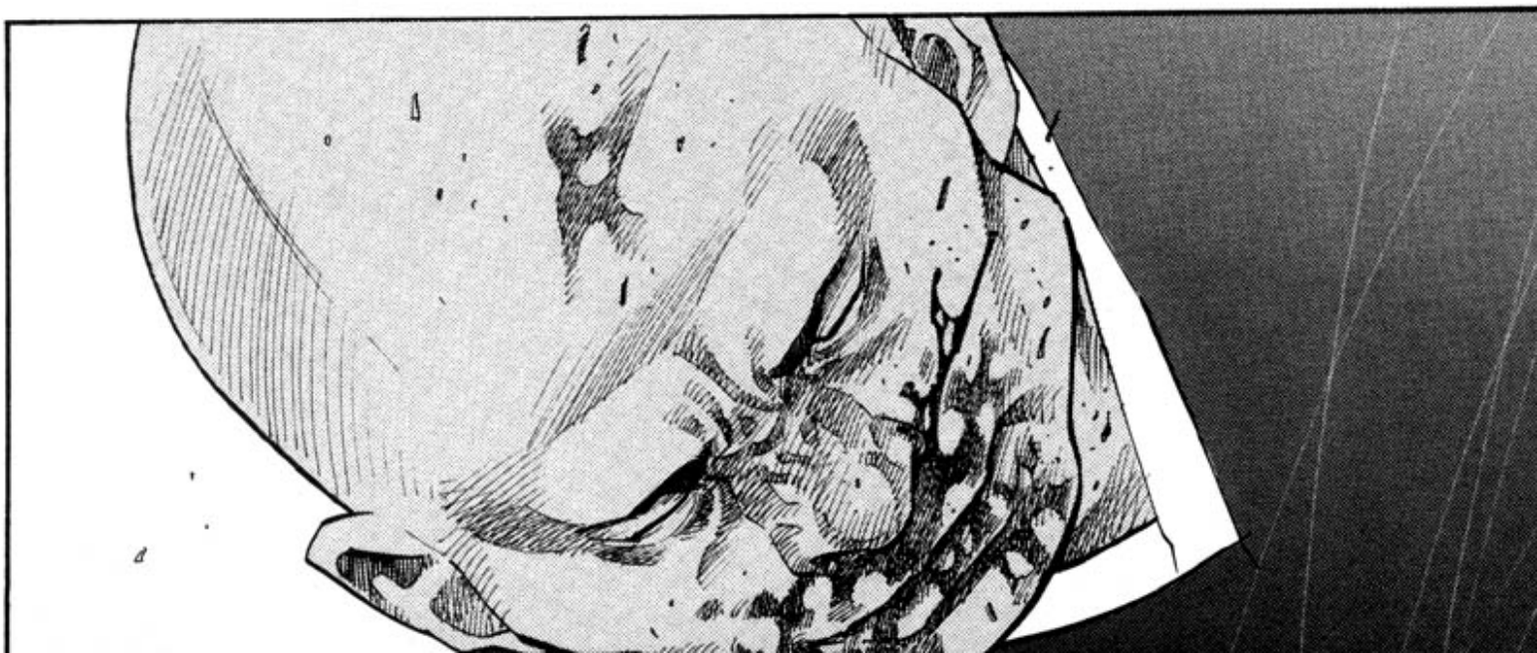
ALL RIGHT...
NOW IT'S MY TURN.
GRRD



HMPH.

HE COUNTERED MY ATTACK!?

!!
KRAK



HUF
HUF
HUF
HE BECAME CARELESS WITH HIS ATTACKS AFTER I LOST MY WEAPON...
I'LL HAVE TO WATCH OUT FOR THAT IN THE FUTURE, MYSELF...
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
I WON...
FWUMP
KLAP KLAP KLAP
!

VERY NICE.
KLAP
KLAP
KLAP

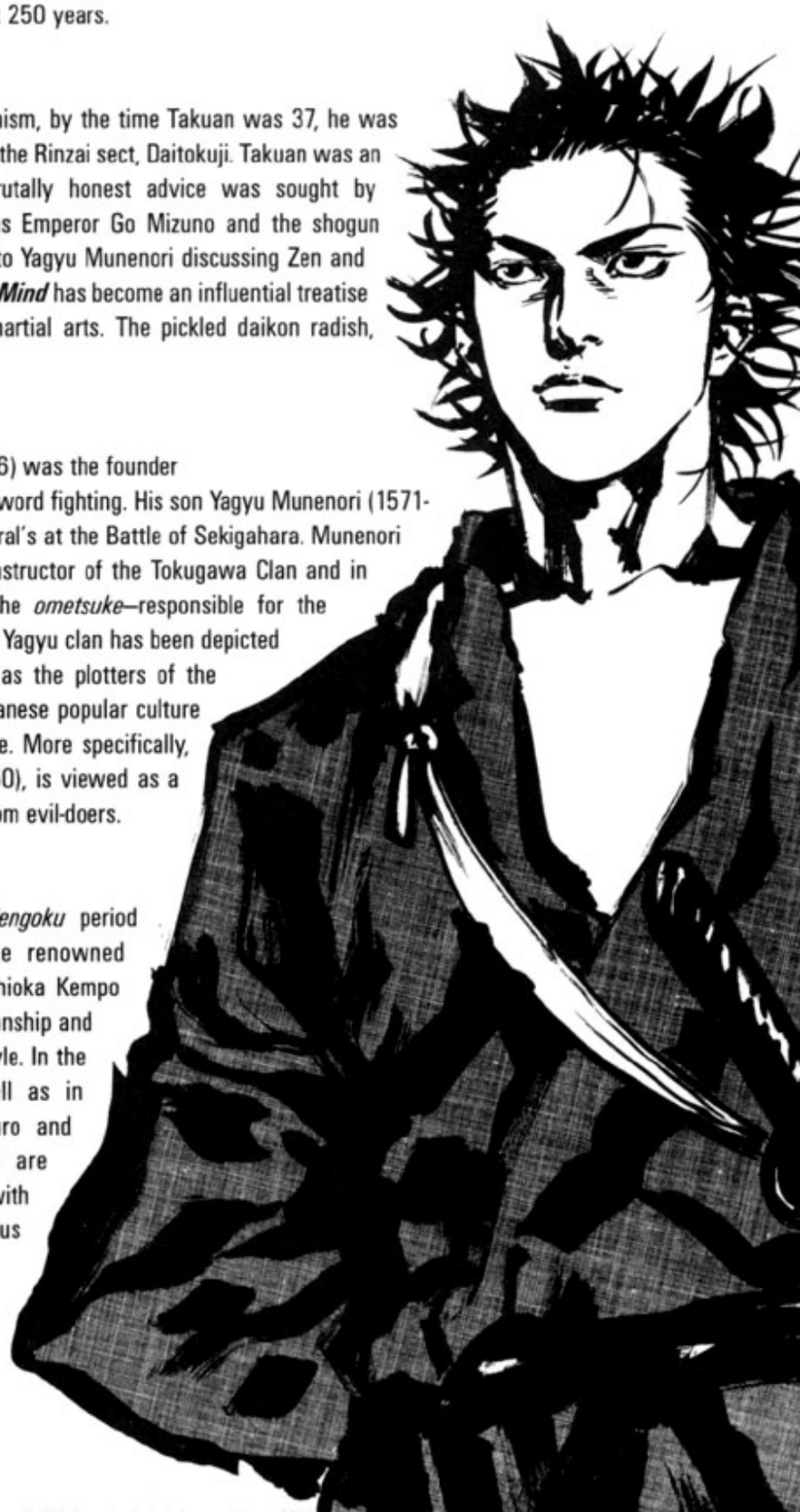
Vagabond

successful, by the time of his assassination in 1582, he managed to control approximately one-third of all of Japan. One of Nobunaga's chief generals, Toyotomi Hideyoshi, became Nobunaga's successor to carry on the quest for unification. Through a process of conquest and conciliation, Hideyoshi succeeded in creating an orderly federation amongst the *daimyo* and by 1590, order was restored to Japan under Hideyoshi's rule. Hideyoshi's death in 1598, however, presented the question of succession. Most of the *daimyo* from the domains in the west remained loyal to the Toyotomi Clan and its 5-year-old heir, Toyotomi Hideyori. Tokugawa Ieyasu, however, leading the major *daimyo* from central and eastern Japan, challenged the Toyotomi clan's leadership. The two sides clashed at the Battle of Sekigahara(1600) in Mino (located in present day Gifu Prefecture) where the Tokugawa claimed an overwhelming victory. From that point on, the Tokugawa clan would effectively rule Japan for the next 250 years.

Takuan Soho (1573-1645)
A monk of the Rinzai sect of Zen Buddhism, by the time Takuan was 37, he was appointed abbot of the leading temple of the Rinzai sect, Daitokuji. Takuan was an important figure whose acute and brutally honest advice was sought by influential and powerful figures such as Emperor Go Mizuno and the shogun Tokugawa Iemitsu. His correspondence to Yagyu Munenori discussing Zen and swordsmanship entitled ***The Unfettered Mind*** has become an influential treatise in both the areas of philosophy and martial arts. The pickled daikon radish, *takuan*, also bears his name.

The Yagyu Clan
Yagyu Muneyoshi Sekishusai (1527-1606) was the founder of the famed Yagyu-Shinkage school of sword fighting. His son Yagyu Munenori (1571-1646) was one of Tokugawa's key general's at the Battle of Sekigahara. Munenori was appointed as the official fencing instructor of the Tokugawa Clan and in 1632 the Yagyu were appointed as the *ometsuke*—responsible for the surveillance of the daimyo. Although the Yagyu clan has been depicted in Kazuo Koike's ***Lone Wolf and Cub*** as the plotters of the downfall of Itto Ogami, the general Japanese popular culture take on the Yagyu Clan is more positive. More specifically, Munenori's son, Yagyu Jubei (1607-1650), is viewed as a wandering hero protecting the people from evil-doers.

Yoshioka Kempo (dates unknown)
A distinguished warrior during the *Sengoku* period (1482-1558) and the founder of the renowned Yoshioka school of sword fighting. Yoshioka Kempo mastered the Kyohachi style of swordmanship and then modified it to form the Yoshioka style. In the context of Inoue's ***Vagabond*** as well as in Yoshikawa's ***Musashi***, Yoshioka Seijuro and Denshichiro are Kempo's sons who are historically thought to have dueled with Miyamoto Musashi on numerous occasions.



About the Author

Vagabond was created by Takehiko Inoue, author of the best selling manga ***Slam Dunk***, with over 100 million copies in print worldwide. For his work on ***Vagabond***, Inoue received the 2000 Media Arts award for Manga from the Japanese Ministry of Culture as well as the 2000 Kodansha Award for best manga. Most recently in 2002, Inoue's ***Vagabond*** received the prestigious Tezuka award for best manga. To date, ***Vagabond*** has sold well over 22 million copies throughout the world. In addition to his numerous manga titles, Inoue also created the character designs for the PlayStation basketball game, ***One on One***.

About *Vagabond* and *Miyamoto Musashi*

Takehiko Inoue's ***Vagabond***, based on Eiji Yoshikawa's novel ***Musashi***, is a fictional account of the life of Miyamoto Musashi (1584-1645). The historical figure Miyamoto Musashi, author of the philosophical strategy guide ***A Book of Five Rings***, was a master of the sword and was revered as a "sword-saint." He founded the Niten Ichi style of sword fighting which is typified by fighting with both long and short swords at once, holding the long sword with the right hand and the short sword with the left. Musashi was also a master of the "gentler arts"–he was a master of *sumi-e* (black ink drawings), metalworking, and woodcarving. The films, ***The Samurai Trilogy***, directed by Hiroshi Inagaki and starring Toshiro Mifune were also based on Yoshikawa's ***Musashi***.

Glossary and Extraneous Background Information

Hozoin Spear Technique

Created by the Buddhist monk Kakuzenbo Hoin In'ei (1521-1607) of Hozoin Temple which was a sub-temple of Kofukuji Temple in Nara. This spear technique is typified by quick dexterous movements rather than the use of brute force.

The Sengoku Period and the Battle of Sekigahara

The Warring States or *Sengoku* period (1482-1558) in Japan was a time of chaos and conflict. Central authorities, in the form of the imperial court and the shogunate, had grown increasingly weaker and the land was effectively ruled autonomously by numerous *daimyo* (domainal lords). Looking to expand their spheres of control, the *daimyo* were constantly at war with each other. One *daimyo* in particular, Oda Nobunaga, set out on a mission to unify Japan by means of conquest. Incredibly

What the critics are saying about *Vagabond*.

"...this reads like an Akira Kurosawa film captured on the printed page. Takehiko Inoue's fine line art, much more detailed for the norm for Japanese manga, is a real treat, while the storyline captivates."

–Cliff Biggers, *Comic Buyer's Guide*

"Takehiko Inoue's vibrant postmodern spin on the (samurai) genre is topnotch in every respect."

–S.A. Bennett, *Comic Buyer's Guide*

"This beautifully drawn series has incredible action, a hint of romance, and a strong core of Japanese history...this book now has the possibility of taking off like a rocket with the American audience."

–Troy Brownfield, *Shotgun Reviews*

"Inoue's artwork is flat-out gorgeous, whether it's in the brief color sections or in black and white. There is a stunning amount of detail in the backgrounds and in the character designs, and it's clear that there has been a lot of research into the costumes, weapons and settings of the era."

–Randy Lander, *TheFourthRail.com*

"It is a masterwork in story and art. In no time you are drawn into the characters, first by the skillful art and then by the story. I found Takehiko's art most appealing and his storytelling ability superb."

–David LeBlanc, *Comic Book Net Electronic Magazine*

"I was entranced within pages of reading *Vagabond*; Inoue's adaptation of Yoshikawa's *Musashi* pulls you right into the story and doesn't let you go."

–Greg McElhatton, *icomics.com*

"What makes *Vagabond* stand out, and makes this something more than just a retelling of Musashi's life is Inoue's feel for characters, breathing life into figures who lived in a world so long ago and far away."

–Matt Brady, *Newsarama*

"Inoue masterfully portrays the brutality of *Vagabond's* setting and the interaction of the characters...Inoue can surprise and even shock the reader with the turns his story and their lives can take. Combined with often breathtaking art, this makes for an extremely satisfying comics experience." –Tony Isabella, *Comics Buyer's Guide*

"I think this manga has something for everyone. A MUST READ!"

–Phoenix, *MangaManiacs.org*

"An excellent manga, presented with noticeable care... If you're a fan of Japanese history, you need this in your library. It's that good."

–Patrick King, *animefringe.com*

This is the LAST page of this comic!

Vagabond has been printed to read from **right** to **left** in its original Japanese format—presenting Takehiko Inoue's dynamic artwork the way it was meant to be seen!

When most Japanese comics are published in English, a mirror image of the original artwork is printed in order to accommodate the left to right reading orientation of English. For this reason, errors in continuity occasionally occur and characters who were originally right-handed suddenly become left-handed. In order to present manga in its purest form, ***Vagabond*** is being printed to read from right to left. This way, kimono are worn with the left side over the right and the samurai's long and short swords are carried on the **left** side, the way they were traditionally worn.

To properly enjoy ***Vagabond***, start from the other end of this comic and read from right to left.

A note on names: The names presented within the context of this comic are presented in the traditional Japanese order—surname, followed by first name. "Miyamoto" is Miyamoto Musashi's last name and "Musashi" is his first name. The name of the creator of ***Vagabond***, however, has been presented first name first, last name second. "Takehiko" is the author's first name and "Inoue" is his last name.

If you're interested in Japanese culture, this is a must-buy for you. The story is fast-paced; the artwork is a feast for the eyes...This is one of the best works of historical fiction I've ever read...
—Patrick King, *animefringe.com*

Legendary sword-saint, Miyamoto Musashi, was one of the most renowned samurai of all time. But the path to greatness is filled with difficulty—Musashi is divided between his aspiration to be the greatest swordman in the land and his growing feelings of love for his friend from childhood, Otsu. As Musashi struggles to deal with these issues, he heads to Hozoin Temple, to challenge the practitioners of its famous spear fighting technique.

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